

# Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 41

The Daoguard Tower

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

## Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller... than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: The Church of Annihilation

In the Brightshore Kingdom of the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Whoosh. The black-robed Primaltwin Ji Ning appeared out of nowhere in front of the imperial palace.

A snowy-robed old man had been waiting here for quite some time. It was Hegemon Brightshore.

“Darknorth,” Hegemon Brightshore said hurriedly.

“Hegemon Brightshore, what is this about? You summoned me quite hastily,” the black-robed Ning said with a smile.

“I was asked to do so by a friend.” Hegemon Brightshore smiled in a rather embarrassed manner. “I didn’t want to bother you with this request, but it involves a Hegemon who you are on very good terms with – the Paragon of Pills.”

The black-robed Ning’s pupils contracted: “The Paragon of Pills? What’s this about?”

“You have probably heard of my friend before; he’s the leader of the Church of Annihilation in that otherverse you visited,” Hegemon Brightshore said. “I can’t explain it as clearly as he can; I’ll take you over to see him.”

“I’ll go take a look then.” Ning had the vague feeling that the reason why he wouldn’t be able to continue his relaxed, wandering life for much longer was because of the Paragon of Pills and the lord of the Church of Annihilation... and that this matter was of grave import!

The higher a level of insight one reached, the more clearly one would be able to divine the tides of the future. But of course, the future was always in a state of flux; no amount of scrying was guaranteed to be accurate!

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Hegemon Brightshore led Ning through a spacetime tunnel to quickly arrive at the alternate universe.

“This tunnel again, eh?” Ning glanced at the empty void around him, then at the enormous dimensional vortex. He let out a sigh. “It was me, Skyfire Brightshore, Greatjoy, Solewind, and Firesurge who went on that journey together all those years ago through this otherverse.”

“None of them have achieved as much as you,” Hegemon Brightshore said. “This is doubly true for Skyfire, who has progressed the least out of the five. We Chaos Godbeasts are, as a race, slow in cultivation.”

Ning replied, “You have your boons, and you have your banes. Some things you simply cannot force.”

Of those four friends, Skyfire, Greatjoy, and Solewind had been sincere in their friendships towards him. Ning was able to keenly sense this through the karma which tied them together. As for Firesurge... Ning was able to discover through karma that Firesurge wasn't all that sincere, and as a result the karmic ties binding them were quite weak. When Solewind, Greatjoy, and Skyfire were ready for the Daomerge, Ning would send over some presents and help them as best he could.

However, that was as much as he could do for them. He couldn't even guarantee that his own daughter Brightmoon would succeed in the Daomerge; all he could do was prepare the treasures which would be of use to her.

“I wonder if those three and Ninedust will succeed in the Daomerge or not,” Ning mused.

Suddenly, a figure manifested out of nowhere within the primordial chaos in front of Ning. This figure was extremely skinny and dressed in black armor, and he radiated an icy aura. This person immediately bowed respectfully towards Ning: “Annihilation pays his respects to you, Daolord Darknorth.”

The reason why this person had named his church the ‘Church of Annihilation’ was because his own Daoist title was ‘Annihilation’! This was a Daoist title he had chosen long ago, when he was young and had no idea that one of the exalted Autarchs was also known as ‘Autarch Annihilation’. In truth, this was actually a fairly common Daoist monicker.

There were a number of commonly-used Daoist titles which were shared by many cultivators.

“The leader of the Church of Annihilation.” Ning nodded. “I heard of you back when I was a World-level cultivator.”

“Back then, Brightshore asked me to help out. I watched all five of you the entire time, Daolord.” Lord Annihilation immediately squeezed out a smile: “If I had known back then that you would reach such heights, I would’ve done everything in my power to befriend you back then.”

Ning laughed.

“My main goal back then was to temper Skyfire,” Hegemon Brightshore said hurriedly. “That’s why I hid the truth.”

“Don’t worry, I fully understand what you were intending and how much effort you put into it. Chaos Godbeasts are solitary by nature, but you’ve poured all of your energies into building up your clan.” Ning smiled and nodded, then glanced at Lord Annihilation. “Speak, Annihilation. Why have you sought me out... and for that matter, why have you sent a mere incarnation? You didn’t even send your avatar, much less your true body.”

After one bound an otherverse, the otherverse would become akin to a clone. An Otherverse Lord would be able to easily materialize an incarnation anywhere within the otherverse. Even Otherverse Lords would feel slighted by Lord Annihilation sending a mere incarnation to greet them, to say nothing of someone of Ning’s stature!

“Daolord, please forgive me. My true body and my avatar aren’t able to make it back. There’s nothing I can do,” Lord Annihilation explained hurriedly.

“What’s this all about, and why is it connected to the Paragon of Pills?” Ning asked. Ning felt a profound sense of fondness towards the Paragon of Pills, because she truly had treated him very well. Ning could sense that she loved him as she would a family member! Through karma, Ning had previously been able to sense that she was still alive, but was incredibly far away from him... but now, even after entering the otherverse, Ning still felt she was incredibly far away from him. This meant she clearly was no

longer inside the otherverse!

For Lord Annihilation's true body and avatar to also be absent... Ning had a bad feeling about this.

"Let me explain the situation," Lord Annihilation said respectfully. "Daolord, I imagine you know that the Paragon of Pills has always wanted to revive her three elder 'brothers'."

Ning nodded.

"However... all three of them were powerful Eternal Emperors, and one of them was a Hegemon," Lord Annihilation explained. "If they had died in the outside world, not even Autarchs would be able to reverse spacetime to revive them. Thankfully, they only died within my otherverse, but the backlash that would be generated if I tried to bring them back would probably cause the prime essences of my otherverse to collapse. Only Autarchs are strong enough to prevent this from happening and maintaining my otherverse's stability while still reviving the three of them. My otherverse would still be badly wounded, but it would remain intact."

Ning understood this principle. When that Sword Hegemon had died, the prime essences of the otherverse had naturally swallowed his truesoul fragments right away. There was no way to force them to 'spit it back out', because those truesoul fragments had already been integrated into the deepest parts of the otherverse's core, becoming part of it. If Lord Annihilation tried to forcibly bring them back, the damage caused to the otherverse would be enough to cause its prime essences to break apart. The entire otherverse would be doomed!

Only Autarchs were capable of reviving Hegemons in an otherverse without destroying it, because they were the ones who had created the otherverses to begin with. They knew how to protect the otherverses and ensure that they were 'merely' injured, not destroyed.

Otherverses... in the end, they were only comparable in size and scope to a realmverse, and so the truesoul fragments of a Hegemon were incredibly important and greatly beneficial to them. The awesomely vast Chaosverse

itself was naturally a different story; it was countless times larger than any realmverse, and it was so mighty that no Autarch could endure its power and bind it. Only a mythical Omega Autarch would be capable of binding the Chaosverse, whereas even ordinary Eternal Emperors were capable of binding an otherverse. The difference was enormous!

“She wanted to find an Autarch to revive the three of them,” Lord Annihilation said, “Because this was her greatest goal, her reason for cultivation.”

Ning couldn't help but sigh. Although he had only spent a limited amount of time with her, he was able to sense how deep her feelings were towards those three men.

“Even Autarchs would have to carefully protect and safeguard my otherverse as they worked to revive the three of them. This is a very tiring and very troublesome task,” Lord Annihilation said. “And in general, Autarchs do not agree lightly to revive a Hegemon. The Paragon of Pills once did manage to contact an Autarch, but the demands the Autarch listed were so harsh that even I felt completely stupefied.”

“Harsh demands ?” Ning asked, “What were the demands?”

“He asked for treasures equivalent to a thousand realmships in value,” Lord Annihilation said.

Even Ning turned speechless upon hearing this. However, he knew what the Autarchs were thinking. Cultivation was meant to be a dangerous path; if everyone who died on this path could be brought back to life, wouldn't it make cultivation nothing more than a game? In addition, reviving destroyed truesouls would have a negative impact on the very fabric of reality and the laws of the Chaosverse. Yes, each revival only had a small impact, but it could quickly add up. This was not a good thing, especially when invaders from a foreign Chaosverse were lying in wait.

On the other hand, if they completely refused to revive anyone, they would probably cause many cultivators to feel absolute despair... and so, they had chosen to instead exact stringent requirements for their aid. You want me to revive a Hegemon and two Emperors? Sure. Give me a

thousand realmships worth of treasure.

“I’ll wager not even the Sithe have that many realmships.” Ning shook his head.

“The Paragon of Pills asked the Autarch to guide her in finding enough treasure. The Autarch told her that the Sithelands is filled with treasure; the only problem was, was she woman enough to take them?” Lord Annihilation continued, “And so, ever since she became a Hegemon she began to make repeated trips to the Sithelands. To tell you the truth, I’ve met countless cultivators, but I can count on one hand how many people are as fearless and maniacal as she is in her pursuit of Sithe treasures.”

## Chapter 2: The Crazy Paragon of Pills

“The legends say that the Sithelands is the most dangerous place in the Chaosverse,” Lord Annihilation said. “It can threaten even the Autarchs! But it truly is filled with the most treasures as well.”

“There are some who are very stubborn and are willing to place themselves at high risk by repeatedly venturing into the Sithelands for the sake of their goals. Those people are absolutely mad, but they are often quite deadly. So long as they survive, their repeated journeys will usually result in them possessing several Sithe weapons.” Lord Annihilation said helplessly, “The Paragon of Pills is one such madwoman. She’s quite famous, and she has multiple Sithe weapons. Even I am merely on par with her in power! I would only have an advantage if we actually fought inside my otherverse.”

Ji Ning fell silent. For the sake of her goals, she was willing to repeatedly brave danger and tread the line between life and death. Suddenly, the image of a woman clad in black gauze appeared within Ning’s mind. This was a woman who was forever cold and distant.

Although they hadn’t known each other for too long, this woman had treated him as family and had asked him to address her as ‘Mistress’, with the Sword Hegemon being Ning’s ‘Master’. Ning still clearly remembered the final words the Paragon of Pills had said to him when they parted:

“You must be very careful on your path of cultivation. If you encounter any serious issues, you can use my name to warn those who would harm you. It might be of some use.”

“You can use my name to warn those who would harm you,” Ning murmured softly. In the past, he hadn’t really taken this to heart... but now, it seemed, she was known as a ‘madwoman’ who had so many Sithe treasures, even Hegemons would feel a hint of trepidation. She was also quite well-known, given how many trips she had made to the Sithelands. That meant that her name would indeed be quite useful as a protective talisman.



“Where is she now?” Ning asked.

“In the Sithelands,” Lord Annihilation said hurriedly. “My true body is there as well! Although I am an Otherverse Lord, I wasn’t a Hegemon prior to taking control over the otherverse and so am weaker than the Otherverse Lords in terms of my insights into the Dao. I’m supported by the power of my otherverse, but in terms of raw power I’m somewhere between a Hegemon and an ordinary Otherverse Lord.”

“Thus, I sometimes find it difficult to slay powerful Hegemons. Brother Brightshore is a good example; it’d be very hard for me to kill him,” Lord Annihilation said. “That’s why many major powers seek to kill me and then take my otherverse, which makes life quite miserable. I spend most of my time hiding inside of my otherverse.

“This time, the Paragon of Pills found a truly remarkable place which she felt certain was a Sithe treasury, but it was also a place of incredible danger. She sent out invitations for people to join her. I thought to myself, ‘Weak Sithe weapons are useless to you. If you are going to take a risk, go all out and take a big one!’ The Paragon of Pills has visited the Sithelands many times and is experienced in navigating it, and so I decided to take part in this trip.”

“Myself, the Paragon of Pills, and two others headed off on this journey together. One of the two is just as crazy as the Paragon of Pills is. As it turned out, the Paragon’s predictions were correct; she truly did find an enormous Sithe treasury, but it was filled with many dangers,” Lord Annihilation said. “In the end, we were defeated and one of us died, leaving just three of us alive; myself, the Paragon, and that other madman. However, all three of us ended up being separated.”

“To be honest, when we headed in we already knew of your illustrious fame. Back then, many of us were actually commenting that the Paragon now stood a very good chance of achieving her goals. If she asked you to help out, she’d probably be able to revive her three brothers.

“However, she refused to send you a message, even after we fell into grave danger. She said that the treasury was far too dangerous, and she

knew that if you found out you would probably go there to rescue her... but the end result might be that you yourself would also be trapped.” Lord Annihilation continued, “Now, all three of us have been split apart. All of us are in mortal danger... and so I can no longer afford to respect her decision not to contact you. That’s why I have come to ask you to help out, Darknorth.”

Ning nodded somberly. The Sithelands was indeed extremely dangerous! Even the Autarchs had merely sealed it away, not daring to trespass too deeply within it. If they did, even they would be at risk of perishing.

Even the outer perimeter held a number of extremely dangerous areas which had simply been sealed off rather than penetrated and destroyed. Thus, even if Lord Annihilation was to ask an Autarch for help, the Autarch would probably be unwilling to assist. There were some unexplored places which even the Autarchs were unfamiliar with; it just wouldn’t be worth it for them to risk themselves like that.

“Wait. You came here to ask Darknorth to go into the Sithelands to rescue you?” Hegemon Brightshore glared at him, hard. “Annihilation, that’s not what you told me earlier.”

“I was afraid that if I told you too much, you wouldn’t help me.” Lord Annihilation hurriedly apologized, “Brightshore, I’m sorry about this.”

“You son of a...” Hegemon Brightshore was absolutely livid. “The Paragon of Pills is crazy, and you yourself said the third person is also a madman. I don’t really approve of their behavior in general, but I have to admit that all of them are extremely well-versed in the dangers of the Sithelands. If both of them are trapped with no way out, then the area you were in was definitely an incredibly dangerous one.”

“Yes.” Lord Annihilation nodded shamefacedly. It was indeed incredibly dangerous. He could still remember that nightmarish battle which had claimed the life of their fourth party member. The other three had been lucky enough to survive, but had ended up being separated. Even when they had been together, progress had been arduous. Now that they were separated, their chances were exceedingly grim. That was why he had

come to beg Darknorth for aid.

All of them were much weaker than Daolord Darknorth, who had slain even the Lonely King with a single swipe of the sword.

“Daolord, I really was out of options,” Lord Annihilation said, rather embarrassed.

“Tell me where you are in the Sithelands,” Ning said. “I’ll go there as soon as possible. Also... do everything you can to protect the Mistress. Otherwise... when I see you, you are still going to die.”

“The Mistress?” Lord Annihilation was stunned. He knew that Ning had a very special relationship with the Paragon of Pills, but he had no idea that Ning would refer to her using such a close and familial term.

“Star map.” Ning looked at him.

“Here’s the star map, Daolord.” Lord Annihilation waved his hand, causing a star map to appear before them. The only parts of the star map which were detailed were the parts involving the Sithelands.

Ning gave it a glance. The five Autarchs had long ago provided Ning with a highly detailed star map of the entire Chaosverse, and they had taken especially detailed notes on the Sithelands, the only place which was a threat to them. Ning had a far more detailed map of the Sithelands than Lord Annihilation, and as a result he immediately knew where they were.

“Alright. I understand.” Ning nodded, then turned and went back into the spacetime tunnel with Hegemon Brightshore.

The two returned to the Brightshore Kingdom of the Flamedragon realmverse. Hegemon Brightshore’s wizened old face was covered with embarrassment: “Darknorth, I had no idea that Annihilation was going to make a request like this one. We’ve known each other forever. I can’t believe he pulled something like this on me.”

Ning shook his head. “His life was at stake. Playing a little trick on you is nothing.”

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The Wildsky Realmverse. The Greatland Planet.

Ning's true body was there alongside his eighth disciple Stonepool, Ji Brightmoon, Ji Yichuan, Yuchi Snow, Subhuti, Windfiend, Su Youji, Azurefiend, Protector Whitethaw, and the Flamewing God.

"I'm not going to lie. This trip to the Sithelands will be a bit risky," Ning said. "I'm not sure I'd be able to keep you all safe, and so all of you shall wait here. I've already sent word to Realmslord Windgrace to come and pick you up."

They only had just a single realmship, and Ning needed it to visit the Sithelands. Thus, he asked Windgrace to come and pick them up. The sooner he went off to rescue the Paragon of Pills, the better his chances would be. His family wouldn't be in any danger here in the Wildsky Realmverse either.

They originally had two realmships, but Ning had already given the one he had taken from the Lonely King to Nuwa.

"Master, let me go with you," Su Youji said hurriedly. "I'm not afraid of any danger."

"Ning, my son..." Yuchi Snow was rather worried.

Ning shook his head. "None of you are to follow me! Flamewing, protect them all."

"Don't worry, Master... but make sure you are careful in there," Flamewing said.

"I will." Ning glanced at Azurefiend. "Azurefiend, you are more detail-oriented than him. Take good care of my family and my master. Your avatar can come by my side."

"Understood." Hegemon Azurefiend revealed a look of delight. A place which even Ning felt was dangerous was a place Hegemon Azurefiend would never dare to visit in person, but his avatar was a different story. Being able to experience a dangerous place like this would be of benefit to him in cultivation. He knew that Ning was trying to help him out.

As for Su Youji and Brightmoon? They also had avatars, but those were back in the Flamedragon Realmverse. More importantly, they were far too weak. Even if they did create new avatars, the distance between this place and the Sithelands was simply too far. There was no way their true body would be able to sense and connect to the avatar at such a distance, which meant that the tiny bit of godsense within the avatar would eventually disappear and dissipate from the lack of reinforcement.

Thus, the only person who was lucky enough to take part in this adventure would be Hegemon Azurefiend.

“Brightmoon, I have a task for you.” Ning looked at his daughter. “This new disciple of mine, Stonepool, has yet to truly embark upon the path of cultivation. I’ll temporarily leave his tutelage up to you. Teach him until you are back at the Flamedragon Realmverse.”

“Don’t worry. I’m a Daolord. Teaching him will be no problem.” Brightmoon was extremely confident. She glanced at Stonepool and said, “Junior apprentice-brother Stonepool, I’ll train you well.”

“Alright,” Stonepool said obediently. Everyone here was at an unfathomably more profound level of the Dao than he was.

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That very day, Ning led Azurefiend’s avatar in travelling towards the Sithelands via realmship.

# Chapter 3: Entry

After spending over 12 million years travelling a great distance via realmship, Ji Ning and Azurefiend's avatar finally reached the outer perimeters of the Sithelands.

"So this is the Sithelands?" Ning stared at the titanic glowing sphere that lay amidst the endless darkness.

They were still quite far away from this sphere, and it was roughly comparable to twenty or so realmverses in size! This was the enormous base which the Sithe had secretly constructed after infiltrating the local Chaosverse. The process had been very fast, too fast to stop, because the Sithe had constructed the main parts outside of the Chaosverse, then brought them inside and assembled them together.

It was like a nail which the Sithe had driven into the body of the Chaosverse, a nail which the cultivators were completely helpless against.

Whoosh. The realmship quickly flew closer and closer towards the Sithelands. Finally, they entered the sphere. Light flashed past their eyes, resolving into a strange, delightfully bizarre world.

The Sithelands was like a self-contained ecosystem, with the world within it being completely different from the rest of the Chaosverse! It even contained a few stars in the sky, although the stars had all been battered and broken to the point where the Sithe machinery underneath could be seen. Mysterious runes continued to flow over the surface of those skeletal stars, and they continued to hum with power. Clearly, they must have been incredibly powerful in the past! There was no way for cultivators to take them away and move them elsewhere; they were simply too large in size. Autarchs might be able to do so, but they wouldn't deign to collect 'garbage' like this.

"When we broke through their outer defenses, the cultivators who were present already took away all the Sithe weapons they could move," Ning mused. "The only places in the outer perimeter that are still filled with many Sithe weapons are those forbidden regions which were sealed away."

“Master, we are probably heading into one of those sealed regions, right?” Hegemon Azurefiend felt a mixture of nervousness, excitement, and anticipation.

Ning nodded.

During the Dawn War itself, time was of the essence. Thus, the Autarchs simply did whatever was the most expedient. They sealed away the toughest and most dangerous regions in the outer perimeter, trapping their foes inside. The trapped foes would no longer pose any further threat, after all! They had sealed away many regions during the final invasion. In the end, the heartland regions of the Sithelands had proved to be so deadly that the Autarchs had sealed it away as well, after killing any and all Sithe who dared to come out and fight back!

There had to be many powerful experts who were still alive within the heart of the Sithelands, including a number of Sithe Exalts, but they were no longer able to leave it.

They might be able to win a battle on their own terms and on their own turf, but the Autarchs wouldn't go inside to fight them. Thus, their only choice would be to fight outside... but without the geographical advantage, the end result would be defeat followed by imprisonment, just like the others.

“There are many barriers in the outer perimeters. Over the aeons since the Dawn War, many have been slowly unlocked,” Ning said. “The Autarchs are not opposed to watching Hegemons unlock the barriers and test themselves inside.” Even if the Hegemons perished, their truesoul fragments and energies would return to the Quintessence. This wouldn't have much of an impact on the Chaosverse as a whole.

But of course, if for example 70% to 80% of all the Hegemons in the Chaosverse were to perish? This sort of large-scale death would certainly have an impact, in that the Chaosverse would be poorly equipped for dealing with any foreign invaders. It simply wouldn't have enough defenders! Yes, the Autarchs had played a major role in defending it against the Sithe, but the many Hegemons who had bravely stood up had

also played an important role.

In the end, there simply weren't enough Autarchs to go around.

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Another month went past. By now, Ning had finally reached the region where the Paragon of Pills had been trapped.

Ning stood there in the air, staring at a planet that was surrounded by a billowing black fog. As for Azurefiend's avatar, it stood behind Ning to one side.

"This is one of the sealed regions. The Autarchs didn't attack it, and so it is in perfect shape," Ning mused softly. "Even from here, I can dimly sense the threat it poses. I imagine the Autarchs were able to sense the same, which was why they sealed it off instead of attacking it. Oh, Mistress... how could you be so impetuous as to challenge a place like this?"

"Powerful Sithe weapons can only be found in undamaged places that were completely sealed off," Hegemon Azurefiend said. "If you are careful enough, you might be able to avoid some of the dangers."

"Everyone's putting all their faith on luck." Ning shook his head. Some cultivators would succeed, true, but many would end up dying.

"Let's go inside." Whoosh. Ning led Azurefiend in flying towards the planet of billowing black fog at high speeds. Hiss... the black mist was so highly corrosive that weaker Eternal Emperors would quickly be rotted away into a pile of noxious water. However, Ning's Sword Dao Domain was able to easily hold the mist at bay.

The two continued to fly together through the sea of black mist. They flew for over ten billion kilometers before finally passing through to the surface of the planet below. This was a desolate planet whose surface was filled with countless streams of freezing energy. As Ning and Azurefiend landed on the ground, they turned to stare at the world around them.

"Master, where should we go?" Azurefiend asked. "I can feel a powerful sense of danger coming from this place, as though moving in any direction will result in annihilation."



“The Autarchs sealed away this place because they weren’t willing to spend their energies here, and also because this place can kill Hegemons with ease.” Ning shook his head. As he spoke, he continued to carefully scrutinize the world with his karmic senses.

As soon as he descended upon this world, he was able to use his karma lines to sense and locate both Lord Annihilation and the Paragon of Pills. The karmic connection between Ning and the Paragon of Pills went without saying, while Lord Annihilation’s decision to beg Ning to rescue him had also established karmic ties between them.

“They are both in that direction.” After carefully tracing his karmic ties, Ning was able to fix on their location and he turned to stare towards his left. “Both of them are over there.” This freezing wind howled through the entire area with such intensity that not even he was able to see to a great distance here.

“Let’s go,” Ning said. He immediately headed off, with Azurefiend hurriedly following from behind.

Whooooosh! Far away from them, a ghostly humanoid figure suddenly manifested out of thin air within a crevice in the ground. It stared towards Ning’s direction, followed by its body emanating excited ripples.

“Outsiders! More outsiders! Sisters, more outsiders have arrived!” It didn’t speak at all, it simply used those strange ripples to communicate with its underground comrades.

Soon, even more streams of energy began to surge from underground, each of them manifesting into ghostly humanoid figures within the crevice.

“Two outsiders have come, sisters!”

“Let’s eat them!”

“Quick, let’s eat them all!” Dozens of the humanoid creatures had appeared. They all transformed into streams of energy once more, merging into a single awesome stream of energy that flew like the wind in Ning’s direction. The surface of this world was covered with so many gusts of

cold wind that they weren't particularly noticeable at all.

Ning and Hegemon Azurefiend continued to advance via walking on the surface of this planet. Ning was extremely careful with each move he took. He too felt a sense of grave danger as soon as he stepped foot onto this planet, and he knew that rescuing the Paragon of Pills would be no easy task. He had to be very careful with this.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly turned to glance towards the right, his gaze following upon a distant stream of energy. This stream of energy seemed to be identical with the other howling streams of wind energy that filled this place, but Ning was vaguely able to sense that it was filled with malevolence, greed, and murder.

"What's wrong, Master?" Hegemon Azurefiend didn't feel anything yet.

"Freeze!" Ning barked. His Sword Dao Domain suddenly expanded dramatically, instantly stretching out to encompass the area where the deadly stream of energy was.

The power of his Sword Dao Domain was capable of unleashing a suppressive effect. The stream of energy instantly trembled, then transformed into a series of humanoid figures. These creatures weren't even able to maintain their ghostly image and thus were forced to reveal their true appearances. These were fairly short creatures with grayish-black skin, and their features were fairly handsome... but the nails growing out of their fingers and toes were as sharp as knives.

Trapped by the Sword Dao Domain, the grayish-black creatures all let out agonized shrieks. They struggled fiercely to break free, their claws dancing in the air as they tried to tear the power surrounding them apart.

"So these are the legendary 'vilefiends', the most commonly seen creatures within the Sithelands?" Azurefiend was rather excited.

"Yes. They aren't all that powerful and are the easiest creatures to deal with here, but for this many to attack at once would still be rather problematic to deal with." Ning glanced at the dozens of contorting vilefiends, then unleashed the power of his Sword Dao Domain with but a thought. The vilefiends let out ear-piercing screams before their bodies

shattered apart and disappeared.

Vilefiends were quite unique. They were only able to survive within the Sithelands; even if you managed to capture one, they would instantly dissipate once you took them outside of this area!

Cultivators had noticed something special about these creatures. Generally speaking, the more of them there were in a place, the more dangerous that place was. Ning had immediately encountered dozens of them as soon as he had descended upon this sealed planet; this meant there was an abnormally high concentration of them here.

“I hope the situation isn’t as bad as it looks.” Ning felt even more nervous. The five Autarchs had given Ning extremely detailed maps and notes pertaining to the Sithelands, and Ning couldn’t help but feel increasingly worried for the Paragon of Pills.

“Let’s move fast.” Ning led Azurefiend in advancing towards the other end of his karma lines at high speeds.

# Chapter 4: Daoguard Tower

Shortly after Ji Ning's group walked past this region, the surface of the ground suddenly became liquid, almost watery. A pair of four-hooved creatures appeared from underneath the ground. Each creature had a golden horn atop its head, while their entire bodies was silver in color. Each was over thirty meters large and extremely muscular. As for their eyes, they were gray and looked as cold and desolate as death itself.

"Outsiders have passed through the territory we control. They are headed in that direction over there." The two four-hooved creatures stared towards the distant Ning and Azurefiend.

"All invaders must die."

"Kill them!"

Boom! Boom! The two four-hooved creatures charged through the air at terrifying speeds, moving towards Ning and Azurefiend. They moved far more quickly than the vast majority of Hegemons, with only the most powerful Hegemons who reached Hegemony via the Dao of Lightning or the Dao of Light being able to match up to them in speed. They didn't try to disguise themselves at all as they galloped towards Ning's group at maximum speed.

Ning and Azurefiend both instantly were able to sense the furious power which had erupted behind them, and they hurriedly turned to look at the two streaks of light that had almost reached them.

"Those things?" Ning turned pale. "Silver Goldhorns? Not good!"

"DIE!" The two galloping beasts charged straight towards Ning and Azurefiend, their eyes filled with the cold remorselessness of death.

Azurefiend instantly felt a chill go down his spine. These two creatures were definitely capable of killing him!

Ning expanded his Sword Dao Domain, using it to suppress and weaken the two Silver Goldhorns, but the two were able to continue to charge forwards while growling angrily. Moments later, streaks of sword-light

began to appear and assault the hooves of those two silver beasts.

How could these two creatures possibly comprehend or defend against the marvelousness of Ning's sword-arts?

Thud! Thud! The two Silver Goldhorns stumbled to the ground after their hooves came under assault, but they quickly clambered back up. This time, they chose to fly through the air. Although this resulted in them being slowed down, they were still able to fly through the suppressive effects of the Sword Dao Domain.

"Azurefiend." Ning waved his hand, tossing out six long black chains. "Hurry up and bind them. Use these weapons and wait for my signal."

"Yes, Master," Azurefiend acknowledged. He recognized that these six black chains were the chains that had previously been used to bind Flamewing. At the same time, he couldn't help but feel secretly shocked that these creatures were actually able to force his Master to use these chains.

In truth, Ning was capable of easily defeating these creatures if he himself attacked, but that would require him to use up some of his own energy, which meant using up his own lifespan. Thus, unless absolutely necessary, Ning wanted to avoid using any of his power.

"Gwaaaaaar!" "Kill!" The two Silver Goldhorns continued to charge towards Ning, who continued to unleash the power of his Sword Dao Domain against them. Streaks of sword-light shot out in accordance with Ning's marvelous sword-arts, allowing him to easily toy with them and force them to stumble, stagger, and even be knocked backwards. There was no way for them to approach Ning at all.

The sword-light from Ning's Sword Dao Domain was capable of slaying even Hegemons with ease; these were blows comparable to full-strength strikes from Otherverse Lords. Even though he wasn't able to kill the Silver Goldhorns, he was still able to make things incredibly difficult for them.

"They are strengthened by the Daoguard Tower. Although they are strong, in the end they are nothing more than golems. They have a low

level of insight, making it easy for me to toy with them.” Ning commanded, “Get ready for my signal to use your chains to trap them and then pull them away.”

“I’ve already bound the chains to myself,” Azurefiend said immediately. His avatar manifested a total of six arms, each of which held onto one of the black chains.

“NOW! Catch the one on the left!” Ning ordered.

Right at this moment, the Silver Goldhorn on the left was knocked down as multiple streams of sword-light converged upon it. Azurefiend immediately hurled out his black chains, sending them flying through the air towards the beast. The Silver Goldhorn hurriedly moved to dodge, but four of the six chains still managed to coil around it and bind it tightly. It struggled to fight back, but was completely incapable of breaking free. Soon, it turned limp and stopped resisting.

“These chains have a powerful sealing and draining effect. Flamewing has an almost limitless amount of energy and so the draining meant very little to it, but the Silver Goldhorns draw their power from the Dao Protector Hall. There’s a limit to how much energy they can use.” Ning shook his head.

“Get in here!” Azurefiend immediately drew the bound Silver Goldhorn into one of his top-grade Eternal estate-treasures. A short while later, he retrieved the black chains.

“Huh. Master, why is it that the Silver Goldhorn seems to be extremely weak within my estate-world?” Azurefiend was surprised.

“Because it can no longer sense the Daoguard Tower.” Ning instructed, “Hurry up and catch the other one.”

A short while later, the tag-team of Ning and Azurefiend captured the second Silver Goldhorn and drew it into the estate-world as well.

“What’s a Daoguard Tower?” Azurefiend asked. “Why have I never heard of it before?”

“The Daoguard Tower...” Ning had a rather ugly look on his face. “It is

literally the most dangerous type of location the Sithelands has.”

As soon as Ning saw the Silver Goldhorn, his heart had turned cold. He knew that the situation was even worse than he had thought. Golems like the Silver Goldhorns were extremely powerful, and they were only possessed by Daoguard Towers! Now that he knew that this world was where a Daoguard Tower was located, he knew just how difficult this journey would be.

The Daoguard Tower... as the name implied, it was meant to guard a certain area. Even beings as powerful as the Sithe needed to train and cultivate, and so the most powerful Sithe would generally pay absolutely enormous prices to construct extremely safe, secure, and stable places where they would live and train. These places were known as Daoguard Towers! The powerful Sithe would use everything available to them to reinforce the Daoguard Tower, using it to fight back against foes.

Even the most powerful of foes would generally find it very hard to breach the defenses of a Daoguard Tower, but they did have a weakness – they were completely immobile!

In the Sithe Chaosverse, Daoguard Towers were able to draw upon the natural energies of that Chaosverse. In Ning’s Chaosverse, the Sithe were unable to do the same, and so they had to first pay an absolutely enormous price to set up this place, the ‘Sithelands’! This was a place which held an enormous energy generator within it.

For the Sithe, the ‘Sithelands’ actually served as a ‘miniature’ Chaosverse in many ways. They were able to make use of the energy generator and then build Daoguard Towers throughout the area. Once they were built, they could no longer be moved; this was their main weakness. However, they were tremendously powerful and were perfect for protecting important locations!

Every single Daoguard Tower was extremely difficult to deal with, with the best Daoguard Towers capable of claiming the lives of even the Autarchs! This was why the Autarchs hadn’t fought their way inside. Every single Daoguard Tower represented extreme danger! But of course, they

also had a correspondingly great amount of treasure inside of them. It could be said that Daoguard Towers were literally built out of a giant mound of treasures.

“Silver Goldhorns generally are used to patrol the area outside a Daoguard Tower and locate enemy intruders,” Ning said. “As soon as we ran into those Silver Goldhorns, the master of this Daoguard Tower was probably alerted to our presence as well.”

“Alerted?” Azurefiend was worried.

“Yes. In other words, we are now in a great deal of danger.” Ning smiled. “I might not be able to protect you, in which case your avatar will be finished.”

“Don’t worry about me, Master. I would at most lose the materials needed for an avatar,” Azurefiend said.

“Let’s continue.” Ning didn’t waste any more time on words as he led Azurefiend towards the other end of the karmic lies tying him to Lord Annihilation and the Paragon of Pills.

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Deep within the heart of this planet, there was indeed a tower that was protected by many layers of traps and barriers. This tower had a total of eight levels to it.

A short creature that was merely one meter tall was seated on an altar inside the tower. He was a true Sithe, but he merely had the power of an ordinary Eternal Emperor.

The short creature opened his eyes, staring at the images which had begun to appear in front of him. The images displayed two Silver Goldhorns battling against Ning and Azurefiend. In the end, the two Silver Goldhorns were captured and taken away.

“Cultivators?” The short creature frowned when he saw this. “How odd. Both of these cultivators are odd. One is a Hegemon, but the white-robed cultivator with that black sheath... he looks to be a Daolord. In addition, his truesoul is actually crumbling away, which makes him a Daolord who



has failed the Daomerge. What's going on? From the looks of it, the Hegemon is actually subservient to him."

"And what's with that odd domain? It was able to defeat those Silver Goldhorns with ease." The short creature had the feeling that something was off.

"Ugh. Ever since the barriers were breached, Master slipped away and ordered me to stand guard over the Daoguard Tower." The short creature gritted his teeth, rather unhappy. He had originally been a mere retainer of this Daoguard Tower's owner. Once the barrier had been opened, it was guaranteed that this tower would eventually be conquered by the cultivators, and so the master of this tower had fled, leaving him behind to stand guard.

"Given how easily they dealt with the Silver Goldhorns, I have to be careful with them. Hm... yes, I'll put them in the 'secondary dimension'." The short creature immediately began to activate the power of the Daoguard Tower.

# Chapter 5: Hope of Release

The short creature was unable to disguise the excitement in its eyes. Each time he took control of the Daoguard Tower and used it to deal with powerful figures, he felt extremely happy.

This was because if he truly engaged in a 'fair fight' against those powerful cultivators, he would probably be annihilated with ease. But with the Daoguard Tower at his disposal, he was able to toy with them instead! By now, this was the only bright spot in his life, the reason for him to keep living. The Sithe had been defeated, after all, and his master's orders meant he had to stay here forever. His life was one of solitude and despair. If he didn't have the occasional bit of entertainment, how could he have possibly been able to stay alive? His Dao-heart probably would've crumbled long ago, resulting in suicide.

"Those two are the most powerful cultivators I've ever encountered. I have to be careful. They won't be beaten as easily as other cultivators." The short creature took control over the Daoguard Tower's powers, watching the scenes of Ji Ning and Azurefiend advancing at high speed.

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After dealing with the Silver Goldhorns, Ning and Azurefiend continued to advance at nearly maximum speed.

"What's that?" Ning soon saw some scattered weapons and armor.

"Master, is this connected to the Paragon of Pills' team?" Azurefiend asked.

"This belonged to their slain comrade." Ning scanned the area, his gaze causing time to flow backwards. Soon, Ning was able to see the scene of the Paragon of Pills, Lord Annihilation, a short, fat old man, and a silvery-haired woman fight against a total of four Silver Goldhorns.

The four Silver Goldhorns were overwhelmingly powerful. Although the Paragon of Pills and the others had many tricks up their sleeves, their techniques were blown away in the very first exchange. The short and fat

old man was the closest to the four and the first to die, while the other three scattered and fled.

The four Silver Goldhorns were about to pursue, but all of a sudden they gave up the pursuit and left. Ning narrowed his eyes. "As I thought. This Daoguard Tower has someone controlling it."

The Dawn War had ended long ago, and the barrier sealing the Daoguard Tower had also been breached quite some time ago. Logically speaking, the powerful Sithe who owned this Daoguard Tower had probably slipped away long ago, and so Ning had harbored the faint hope that this Daoguard Tower was now unmanned! However, he knew that even if the Sithe who owned this tower had fled, he might've arranged for a servant or a golem to control it in his stead.

Ning knew that the chances of this Daoguard Tower being unmanned were slim... and now, his hopes were crushed entirely.

"I hope the controller of this Daoguard Tower is a wise man." Ning shook his head slightly, then waved his hand and collected the armor and weapons lying on the ground.

"Master, where should we go next?" Azurefiend asked.

"That's odd." Ning suddenly frowned. "The Mistress and Annihilation clearly fled in two different directions. Why, then, are my karmic senses indicating that they are in the same region right now?"

"Follow me." Ning trusted his karmic senses, and so led Azurefiend in a high-speed advance towards the Paragon's location.

A short while later, Ning came to a sudden halt because a series of ripples had appeared in the air before him. The world around him was beginning to twist and contort as well.

"Master of the Daoguard Tower," Ning said with a frown, his voice echoing within the world around him, "I am simply adventuring in this place and do not intend to enter the Daoguard Tower itself! There is no need for us to fight against each other."

"Ehehehe..." A low, hoarse laugh rang out and echoed within the air

around Ning. “What a formidable Daolord. I am truly rather mystified by you! But this is my territory. Now that you have dared to trespass here, your fate is under my control. Ehehehe... but let’s not be impatient! We have plenty of time. Let’s take it slow and have some fun together.”

“Is this about those two Silver Goldhorns? I can give them back to you,” Ning said.

“Hah! Once I capture you, they’ll become mine again regardless. All the treasures you carry shall be mine! Even you yourself, you diverting Daolord, shall become mine.” The voice was filled with a hint of wicked glee.

Ning’s face hardened slightly. He barked coldly, “So you are a madman. It seems you’ve been alone for so long you’ve gone insane.”

Daoguard Towers were used by powerful Sithe to protect their lairs. Generally speaking, so long as you didn’t try to attack the towers they similarly wouldn’t expend too much effort in attacking you! This was why Ning had tried to be fairly low-key and hadn’t caused too many problems. He had come here to rescue his friends, not to defeat the Daoguard Tower! He had thought that if he didn’t cause a fuss and didn’t infringe upon the Daoguard Tower itself and threaten its controller, the controller wouldn’t start a life-and-death fight against him. Clearly, he was wrong. The controller of this Daoguard Tower was a madman.

The madman by himself wasn’t that frightening, but the Daoguard Tower was!

“Eheheh... no one who has come here has ever been able to escape and survive. You won’t escape either.” As the voice fell silent, the surrounding dimensional ripples quickly began to reach out towards Ning.

“Master?” Azurefiend was a bit worried.

“I’m done playing nice!” Ning’s face hardened and a sharp look flashed through his eyes. “Sword Dao Domain!”

Rumble... countless blades of sword-light appeared throughout this entire planet. Clearly, Ning had just expanded his Sword Dao Domain to

an incredible size, using it to cover the entire planet!

“Suppress!” Ning held nothing back at all. In the past, he had kept his Sword Dao Domain reigned in to cover a fairly small area because he didn’t wish to cause too much of a problem with the master of the Daoguard Tower... but since they were already at loggerheads, he wasn’t going to show any mercy at all.

Rumble... the terrifying Sword Dao Domain instantly crashed down, bringing a terrifying amount of power against everything within this planet.

“Damnit!” The short creature within the Daoguard Tower instantly turned pale, and his eyes became filled with both terror and excitement. His body began to quiver. “This is the domain of an Eternal Omega Sword Dao! Ahaha, it’s actually an Eternal Omega Sword Dao! All my defenses have to hold!”

A series of membrane-like barriers appeared across the surface of this entire planet, each of which covered part of the planet in an interlocking way. Thus, when the membranes rose together, they were able to block off all of the sword-light.

“The Daoguard Tower’s energies are being depleted at an incredible rate.” The short creature was rather nervous. Defending against this much sword-light was consuming power from the Daoguard Tower at a shocking rate, but Ning’s Sword Dao Domain drew energy from the power of the Dao itself; in other words, it drew from the power of the Chaosverse! Its energies were limitless.

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In a different part of this planet, where space and time were both distorted. The Paragon of Pills, dressed in black gauze, was seated in the lotus position within a field of light. Ever since she had been trapped here, she assumed the lotus position and didn’t move around.

“I still haven’t been able to see through the secrets hidden behind this place. The more I move about, the closer I will be to death.” The Paragon of Pills weighed the area around her with her gaze. She had traversed

many places in the Sithelands and had quite a bit of experience in this regard. She was also extremely patient and had reached extremely high levels in the Dao of Karma, the Dao of Formations, and the Dao of Spacetime. Thus, in most places she was usually able to discover the mysteries behind the various traps and then escape.

The reason why she had reached such high levels of skill in these Daos was because she knew she would have to rely on them and herself to revive her departed brothers. She had invested enormous amounts of effort into studying spacetime and karma, and they had become her secret weapons in ensuring that she was able to survive her trips into the Sithelands. Otherwise, she would've died long ago in one of her crazy expeditions here.

Boom! Suddenly, the entire field of light around her shook violently.

"Eh?" The Paragon of Pills lifted her head to stare into the skies. She could sense that outside the field of blurry light, there were two enormous surges of power that were clashing against each other. Both powers were so vast as to cause her to feel shocked.

"Could it be Darknorth?" The Paragon of Pills had a rather complicated look on her face. Her avatar was alongside Lord Annihilation's avatar, and so she knew that Lord Annihilation had gone against her will and asked Ning to come save them.

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"Either we stop now, or we continue until you are gone." Ning's voice was cold, and it rang out throughout the entire world. The walls of rippling spacetime around him blocked out his senses, but he knew that the Daoguard Tower had to be using up an enormous amount of power.

"Stop now? Ahahaha! Go ahead and try to attack the Daoguard Tower. Just try to kill me! Hah! If you can't, you'll be the one to die! Did you really think you are able to contend against me, puny cultivator? Besides, if I can take out someone who is in control of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, my death would have been worth it!" The short creature had never felt this berserk before, because everyone in his own Chaosverse who was in

control of an Eternal Omega Dao would have an extremely high status that was far superior to that of the Autarchs.

This was because Emperors who mastered an Eternal Omega Dao were on par with ordinary Autarchs in might, but the Autarchs had reached the end of the road; there was no way for them to become any more powerful. Omega Emperors, however, still had a chance to take one more step and become Omega Autarchs.

This local Chaosverse was a weak one, and its cultivators were barbaric... which meant that for them, a cultivator who mastered an Eternal Omega Dao would only be even more important!

“If you were a true Emperor, I would probably stand no chance at all. However, your truesoul is crumbling, which means I have a chance to kill you.” The short creature had gone completely berserk, because he knew that if he managed to kill an Eternal Omega Sword Dao wielder, he would have rendered incredible merits to his side. Even if he died, his truesoul would return to his homeland, at which point he would almost certainly be revived and brought back to life for his efforts.

He had thought that his only choice was to await death, that there was no longer any hope in his life... that toying with impudent trespassing cultivators was the only thing left. But now? Now he saw hope, hope of release!

“Die! Dimensional Separator!” The short creature no longer chose to be as cautious as he was at the start. His eyes filled with madness, he immediately used a vicious technique that had a serious backlash effect.

Whoosh!

Ning suddenly felt as though this entire planet had suddenly been split apart like a watermelon. It was separated into two parts, which was then separated into hundreds of different parts! The area he was in was just one ‘shard’ of the watermelon, a shard that was in a completely different dimensional continuum that had been completely locked away, trapping himself and Azurefiend within.

# Chapter 6: They Meet

“Since I’ve chosen to fight, I’m going to use everything I have and give him no chance at all.” The short creature’s eyes were filled with madness. He knew just how terrifying someone who controlled an Eternal Omega Dao could be! Even his master, the original owner of this Daoguard Tower, was far from being a match for Ji Ning. In their own Chaosverse, this short creature would probably never even be given the chance to meet such an august personage.

And precisely because he knew just how fearsome Ning could be, he immediately attacked with all his power!

“In the end, he’s someone who has failed his Daomerge. Sands of Time, arise!” The short creature held nothing back at all, immediately using yet another one of the Daoguard Tower’s killer techniques.

Spots of sparkling, sand-like grains of light instantly flew out of the Daoguard Tower, falling under the spacetime dominion of the tower which synchronized it with and sent it into the sealed dimension which Ning and Azurefiend were trapped in.

“Now for the killing blow. Charge to the maximum power!” The short creature gritted his teeth, and the very tip of the Daoguard Tower suddenly began to light up as a large amount of energy began to gather together there.

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By now, this entire planet had been separated into hundreds of sealed dimensional pockets, with Ning and Azurefiend being trapped in one of them. Azurefiend was starting to panic a bit, because he could sense an enormous amount of danger, as though he could die at any moment.

“Azurefiend, go into my estate-world for now.” Ning waved his hand, pulling Azurefiend into his estate. He then scanned his surroundings. “What a vicious technique... he’s actually willing to destroy his own territory for the sake of killing me! What the hell? Why does he hate me so much? This is the first time we’ve ever met.” Ning couldn’t help but feel



puzzled at how viciously his opponent was behaving. His opponent's very first act was to destroy the very world which the Daoguard Tower had been created to protect. The world itself had also served as an additional defensive layer for the Daoguard Tower. Now the world was gone; the only thing left was the tower itself.

This was clearly a technique which was dangerous to both the user and the target. Generally speaking, most people wouldn't use such a powerful, double-edged technique until things truly grew desperate. Still, the technique was indeed powerful; not even Ning's Sword Dao Domain was capable of breaking through a completely sealed dimension like this.

Clink. Ning drew a Northbow sword from the sheath on his back.

Whooooosh! Just as Ning was about to use his sword to chop apart this cage of sealed spacetime, the entire region suddenly rippled with rainbow light that twisted time wherever the light appeared. In some places, time sped up a million times over; in other places, it froze completely.

Ning's face hardened. "The Sands of Time?" The Sands of Time was yet another type of treasure the Sithe had access to, and it was described in great detail in the records which the Autarchs had given Ning. This type of treasure was extremely dangerous when used against most cultivators, but against Ning it was absolutely lethal!

When activated, it was possible that time would be frozen for the upper half of your body, while time would be accelerated a trillionfold for the lower half of your body. This sort of temporal twisting would cause ordinary Emperors and Hegemons incredible discomfort during battle, lessening their combat prowess... but Ning wasn't an Emperor, he was a Daolord whose truesoul was breaking apart. His truesoul could very well collapse and die from this!

"He first destroyed his own territory, then used the Sands of Time... just to kill me?" Ning had no time to think. He immediately sent a serious, horizontal chop towards the space in front of him.

This blow from his sword seemed to have enough power to completely sever apart everything in Heaven and Earth. The passage of the sword-

light was followed by a tiny thread of water, but a heartbeat later the thread of water transformed into a raging river, and then into a titanic wave. Endless waves of sword-light crashed through the skies with absolutely terrifying power, completely overwhelming the onslaught of the Sands of Time and sweeping through all of the rainbow light!

The terrifying sword-intent had completely submerged and annihilated the Sands of Time. This was Ning's Water Sword Dao!

After destroying the Sands of Time, the wave of sword-light was dramatically weakened as well, but it still continued to sweep forwards and crash against the dimensional membrane of this sealed space.

BOOM! The entire region shuddered violently, as a large amount of cracks began to appear at the margins of this space, both in the skies and deep underground. The cracks spread out like ripples, while Ning stood at the center of the region and watched carefully.

"I thought that strike would've been enough to annihilate both the Sands of Time and this pocket dimension I'm in. It seems I didn't put enough power into that strike. This dimensional pocket is more stable than I thought," Ning mused. He was extremely miserly with his energies right now, and would hold back power whenever necessary without overusing even the slightest amount.

"Go." Ning stabbed out with his Northbow sword once more. This time, he himself transformed into a streak of sword-light that shot outwards. The tip of the sword-light was Ning's Northbow sword, and it easily pierced through the crumbling dimensional seal and appeared outside.

In the instant that he broke through the dimensional membrane, Ning was able to see the hundreds of dimensional shards that hung in the air like lonely little islands. At the very center, there was a clearly visible eight-story tower that was sitting on a foundation of earth that was millions of kilometers in size. The ground was covered with countless runes and ley-lines, allowing it to serve as the foundation of this tower.

It must be remembered that Daoguard Towers were immobile and had to be anchored somewhere. Through the foundation it was anchored to, it

was able to maintain contact with and draw power from the energy generator fueling the entire Sithelands.

“Is that...” Ning instantly saw the dazzling light building at the very tip of the Daoguard Tower.

“Die! DIE!” Spittle was flying out of the mouth of the short creature within the Daoguard Tower, and his eyes were completely deranged. The Dimensional Separator and the Sands of Time were two of his killer weapons, capable of slaying even ordinary Otherverse Lords with ease. The Sands of Time in particular should’ve been a perfect counter for a Daolord whose truesoul was crumbling, but it had still ended up failing. He had never fought someone like this before, after all... but everything was as he had expected.

“DIIIIIIIE!” the short creature howled hoarsely.

BOOM! The light on the top of the Daoguard Tower suddenly shot out, moving at an absolutely terrifying speed. Ning was roughly a billion kilometers away from the Daoguard Tower; given the short distance and the incredible speed of the attack, not even Otherverse Lords would be able to dodge in time.

Swish. Ning suddenly transformed into a streak of electric light that moved with equally terrifying speed. He was able to dodge the attack with ease and then charged straight towards the tower. As for the attack, it shot past the location Ning had been in and then continued on to pass through the distant black fog behind him.

“He dodged it?!” The short creature was both angry and anxious. “He’s too fast. He’s too strong and he’s too fast!” He wanted to kill Ning and then be rewarded for it; this was his only chance of salvation! Alas... the only tool he had available to him was the Daoguard Tower.

“He’s too fast and his sword-arts are too furious. There’s no way I can kill him at long range,” the short creature mused. “I’ll wait for him to come inside. Once he actually enters the Daoguard tower, I’ll unleash all of the Daoguard Tower’s powers at the same time. He’s a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge. He HAS to die from that!”

The farther away two fighters were, the more difficult it would be for one to kill the other. Daoguard Towers were built with layers of defenses. They had roving patrols to keep invaders at a distance, ranged attacks to deal with those who made it past the patrols, and also self-destruct options meant to take out invaders who made it into close range.

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As for Ning, he couldn't help but sigh to himself. "The records indicate that the closer you get to a Daoguard Tower, the more dangerous it is, with the insides of the tower being the most dangerous of all. I've been quite far away from it, but it was still able to force me to use power thrice."

The first time was when he used his sword to break through the Sands of Time. The remaining power hadn't been enough to break through the sealed dimension. He used a fair amount of power in this strike.

The second time had been when he pierced through the sealed dimension and fled, while the third time had been when he used an evasion-art to dodge that strike. He had used up very little power here, with the evasion-art using up the least.

"If I really wanted to break into the Daoguard Tower, I'd probably have to use several times as much energy. In fact, I could well die there," Ning muttered to himself. He once more turned to follow his karmic senses, quickly using his karmic lines to locate the Paragon of Pills. He immediately turned towards one of the hundreds of sealed dimensions. Now that the entire world had been shattered, he was able to find her with ease.

"The Mistress is located in that region over there." Ning was certain of it. As for Lord Annihilation, he was located in another dimensional pocket that was quite close to her's.

Swish! Ning was able to move at incredible speeds when transformed into a streak of electric sword-light. In fact, he was a bit faster than when he had first mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. He instantly appeared in front of the sealed dimensional continuum where the Paragon of Pills was located, then delivered a blow with his Northbow sword.

Whoosh! The sword-light carved a giant gaping hole within the sealed pocket that was thousands of meters long.

Ning had no choice but to do this. These sealed dimensions were so strong and stable that he wasn't going to be able to breach them unless he used his sword.

Through the gaping hole, he was able to clearly see what was inside that dimension. He saw a cold, austere-looking woman dressed in black gauze who was seated in the lotus position. No matter how calm and collected the woman normally was, she was unable to prevent a look of shock from appearing on her face as she turned to stare at the white-robed youth standing behind the gaping hole in the dimensional wall.

"Darknorth?" She recognized this youth right away.

# Chapter 7: Playtime is Over

This was the only disciple her big brother had ever taken. In her heart, Ji Ning was arguably more important than even her own disciples. She had always felt that Darknorth was someone she had to protect... but somehow, without her even realizing it, the kid had grown up. She had received word that the kid had grown to become an absolutely incredible figure, slaying the Lonely King with just a blow of his sword. How unbelievable was this?! She was absolutely delighted to know that her big brother had taken in a truly remarkable disciple.

And today... the young fellow had appeared before her once more, rescuing her from her plight.

“Mistress, let’s hurry up and get out of here!” Ning sent mentally. At the same time, he sent out his Sword Dao Domain to ‘plug’ the gap, preventing it from healing. The Sword Dao Domain was unable to tear through the dimensional seal, but it was able to dramatically slow down the healing process.

“Alright.” The Paragon of Pills rose to her feet, a smile on her face as she transformed into a streak of light and flew out of the dimensional tear. As she did so, she cast a radiant and joyful smile towards Ning. For some reason, she felt even happier than she would’ve if it was her own disciple who had reached such a level of power.

“I was vaguely able to sense that we would meet again, but I never would’ve imagined that the circumstances would be you rescuing me.” The Paragon laughed. “I rather thought that it would be the other way around.”

Ning could sense how happy the Paragon of Pills was. He was quite happy as well. There weren’t that many people who truly treated him as family, but the Paragon of Pills was definitely one of them. In fact, Ning could sense from the Paragon of Pills a sort of motherly love that reminded him of the love which his true mother Yuchi Snow bore him.

“Mistress, you seem quite calm and relaxed. I’ve been worried sick over

you! Thankfully, you are alright.” Ning let out a sigh of relief.

“There’s always danger when adventuring through Sithe ruins. I’ve been in situations like this on multiple occasions,” the Paragon said.

“But this place is different. There is a Daoguard Tower here!” Ning couldn’t help but feel a sense of fear. There was no way the Paragon of Pills or any of the others would’ve been able to flee on their own. A double-edged technique like the Dimensional Separator, which had completely shattered the planet apart and divided it up into many different pocket dimensions, were powerful enough to slay even Otherverse Lords... and that was just one of many techniques the Daoguard Tower had access to!

“Daoguard Tower? What’s a Daoguard Tower?” The Paragon of Pills was rather puzzled, but she hurriedly said, “Let’s not waste any time, Darknorth. This place is extremely dangerous. Let’s leave right away. If you can save my two companions, you should do so; if you cannot, don’t try to force it.”

“I’ll rescue them, but they need to wait a bit.” Ning smiled mysteriously.

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Within the Daoguard Tower.

The short creature stared at the images of the outside world, puzzled. The white-robed Daolord had easily dodged his attack, then immediately moved to another sealed dimension and used his sword to slice through the dimensional membrane. He had rescued the woman who had been trapped inside that dimensional pocket, and the two clearly seemed quite happy to meet each other.

“He came here to save his friends?” The short creature was puzzled.

“Let’s go.” Ning let out a happy laugh, then led the Paragon of Pills in transforming into streaks of light that flew off towards the horizon.

“What?! They are leaving?!” The short creature was stunned. His original plan had been to wait until Ning attacked the Daoguard Tower, then continue his own assaults. His hope was that Ning would actually enter

the tower!

But now... Ning did the exact opposite. After locating the Paragon of Pills, he had immediately moved to depart. Ning had gained a thorough understanding of the Daoguard Tower from the Autarchs; he obviously wasn't going to be foolish enough to charge into the Daoguard Tower when he already knew how deadly it was.

As a result, the short creature's 'perfect plan' came to nothing.

"Did you really think you could just leave whenever you wanted?" The short creature was completely berserk. This represented his only chance of escape and release. Even though his chances were slim, he was still going to use all his power to fight for it!

"Triple Dimensional Hallway Chains!" The creature ranted in a crazed manner, "All Silver Goldhorns, move out and trap them! Daoguard Tower, release the seals and unleash those monsters!"

Upon seeing that Ning was about to leave, the short creature finally unleashed all the tools at his disposal! There were some traps he was unable to use as Ning hadn't moved closer towards him, but he had fully unleashed everything else.

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As Ji Ning led the Paragon of Pills in departing, he sent mentally to her: "That eight-storied tower is known as a Daoguard Tower, a truly terrifying Sithe guard tower. I'm unwilling to actually enter it, but it seems as though the tower's master is hellbent on killing me. Now that I'm 'leaving', he'll probably grow a bit anxious. Let's see what he tries to pull."

Just as his words finished, Ning's eyes widened. "What the..."

The distant Daoguard Tower began to rumble menacingly as the entire thing began to tremble and crack apart like a turtle shell. Even the enormous foundation beneath it was beginning to split apart.

The overwhelming power of the Daoguard Tower spread throughout every pocket dimension surrounding it. The pocket dimensions that had previously hovered around it like little islands suddenly began to shoot out



in every direction, forming a series of dimensional membrane walkways. The only things Ning could see in front of him were those dimensional walkways; he could no longer see the outside world at all.

Ning turned to glance backwards at the Daoguard Tower, which was now filled with innumerable cracks. “He’s wrecking the Daoguard Tower?” Ning could hardly believe it. “Even the foundation is splitting apart!”

The foundation was the most important part of the Daoguard Tower, but even it was beginning to break apart! Ning could tell how terrifyingly determined the Daoguard Tower’s controller was.

A series of thunderous roars rang out, followed by Silver Goldhorns charging out of the various dimensional islands. They were completely unimpeded by the pocket dimensions, coming in threes and fives as they charged towards Ning. All in all, there was a total of sixty-five of the creatures!

Not just that. Two creatures that looked like stone pythons suddenly came flying out of the crumbling Daoguard Tower. When the two stone pythons first flew out, they were quite small, but they quickly expanded in size to many tens of thousands of kilometers long. They were completely formed from stone, and their eyes were a dull gray color. They radiated an aura of life, but their eyes were completely dead.

“They are clearly alive, but they don’t seem to be sentient at all?” Ning was rather shocked.

“Darknorth, can you handle it? Do you need me to help?” The Paragon of Pills couldn’t help but feel nervous when she saw the sixty-five Silver Goldhorns swarming towards them. Her original team had been instantly defeated by four Silver Goldhorns, and so she knew that every single one of them was capable of battling an Otherverse Lord.

It was said that the most dangerous Sithe bases were the ones which held Daoguard Towers, and the number of Silver Goldhorns this place held was proof of it.

This was why the cultivators had been unwilling to actually attack these places during the Dawn War. They had lured the Sithe into the outside

world, ensuring that the strongest Sithe bases were taken out of the equation. Only then did they manage to win and decimate the Sithe forces. Only after doing so did they attack the Sithelands, but even then they had only been able to successfully breach the outer perimeter. As for the Daoguard Towers in the outer perimeter, they had merely sealed them away rather than actually assault them.

“Don’t worry.” Ning let out a chuckle as he released his Sword Dao Domain, causing countless streaks of sword-light to fill the entire area and begin to assault the Silver Goldhorns. The Silver Goldhorns began to stumble, stagger, or even be knocked backwards. There was no way for them to close in on Ning at all.

As for the two stone serpents, they were slowed down by the Sword Dao Domain but they still managed to move closer towards him.

Clack! Clack! Clack! The foundation of the Daoguard Tower splintered apart. Ning cast the shattered foundation a glance. The Daoguard Tower had always given him a sense of danger. Now that the foundation had shattered, he felt that the danger level was actually rising.

A massive creature was slowly beginning to arise from within the vast, shattered foundation. Her body was unmistakably massive, nearly a hundred thousand kilometers in size. This creature had the lower body of a centipede but the upper body of a humanoid female. The nagapede’s face was beautiful and her eyes were shut, and as the foundation and its barriers crumbled around her, the power within her body began to skyrocket.

She slowly opened her eyes. At first, there was a lost look in her eyes, but it was quickly replaced with endless malevolence. She opened her mouth, unleashing an earth-shaking roar of terrifying power that spread out in every direction.

The short creature within the cracked Daoguard Tower stared at the distant Ning, his eyes filled with madness. “Now that I’ve destroyed the Daoguard Tower and released the monster beneath it, I’ll die... but you will die as well. This entire region has been locked by three levels of

dimensional walkway chains. You won't be able to escape. You'll have to fight... and if you do, you failed Daolord, you won't be able to withstand her power. You'll die in battle, and the glory shall go to me! Ahahah!"

BOOM! As the short creature laughed wildly, his body suddenly disintegrated as the shockwave from the nagapede's earth-shaking roar washed past it, destroying even some of the weapons he was carrying before continuing to blast outwards.

Even Ning turned slightly pale when he saw this. As for the Paragon of Pills, she was completely terrified by this display of power. "Such power!"

"I didn't expect that I would be so 'lucky' as to encounter something like this in my very first Daoguard Tower." Ning had a solemn look on his face. He had learned many secrets from the Autarchs, and so he knew exactly what this creature which had been imprisoned beneath the Daoguard Tower was.

# Chapter 8: The Nagapede

The shockwave from the roar blasted outwards from the vast creature, causing space itself to tremble and shudder.

This roar alone was capable of heavily injuring Hegemons, but it was still a bit weaker than Ji Ning's Sword Dao Domain. Long before it even got close to Ning, it was blocked off by those endless streams of sword-light.

"What is that freak?" the Paragon of Pills asked.

"Many dangerous areas in the Sithelands have been sealed off, and some of those areas are places with Daoguard Towers," Ning said. "Daoguard Towers vary in power; there's obviously no way that a Hegemon's Daoguard Tower would be as strong as an Exalt's Daoguard Tower. This Daoguard Tower we ran into wasn't all that strong; the owner definitely wasn't a Sithe Exalt. However, all Daoguard Towers contain a multitude of attacks, ranging from long-distance strikes, traps to capture foes, close-range attacks, and a final kamikaze attack."

"A kamikaze attack?" The Paragon of Pills was surprised.

"For example, this Daoguard Tower was used to suppress a creature known as a nagapede," Ning said with a laugh. "Even back during the Dawn War, our side only encountered a total of nineteen such creatures. I didn't expect to run into one of them today."

It was quite rare for a Daoguard Tower to be hiding such a powerful creature beneath it, which was why Ning had mocked himself as being 'lucky'.

The Autarchs and the cultivator civilizations all lived in a single enormous celestial entity known as their 'Chaosverse', while the Sithe hailed from a different Chaosverse. Chaosverses were the largest celestial bodies in the Infinite Void, but the Void did hold some other creatures within it as well. On the whole, these creatures were generally less intelligent than beings who lived within the Chaosverses, as only the vitality of a Chaosverse could give rise to truly perfect beings and the

incredible figures who would become the Lords of Chaos.

The creatures who lived within the Infinite Void were somewhat inferior... but many of them were born with incredible strength! However, their low level of intelligence made it easy for them to be manipulated and made use of. The Autarchs had once slain two strange creatures who were comparable to Autarchs in power. Both of them came from the Infinite Void.

When the Sithe invaded Ning's Chaosverse, they not only lost the benefit of having the Dao empower their strikes, they were also suppressed by the 'foreign' Chaosverse itself! This was why the local cultivators were able to make their invasion so difficult. But in the Infinite Void? There, they weren't strengthened by the Dao but also weren't suppressed. As a result, they were much more powerful and able to capture many of the strange beings which lived in the Void.

"This creature is fairly powerful. It is probably on par with Sithe Exalts," Ning said.

"On par with Sithe Exalts? What are we supposed to do, then?" A look of worry appeared on the Paragon's face.

"Leave it to me," Ning said.

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The titanic creature's lower centipede-body slithered forward slightly, its giant head focused straight towards the area Ning was in. The Silver Goldhorns, Ning, and the Paragon of Pills were all there.

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" the nagapede growled.

"Can you tell me your name?" Ning said, his voice transmitting directly into the ears of the creature.

The nagapede stared back at Ning with a savage, maddened look in her eyes. Suddenly, she let out a fierce howl and shot forwards, her centipede-like body scuttling forwards like a crawling streak of light that shot straight towards Ning.

“Yet another one which has been driven mad. Many of these creatures caught by the Sithe end up being driven mad by them.” Ning shook his head. These powerful creatures weren’t very intelligent, but they were at least comparable to ordinary mortal adults. This one, however, was more like a madman.

Whoosh! She scuttled forwards at incredible speeds. Ning and the Paragon of Pills were far away, with countless streams of sword-light barring the nagapede’s path towards them. Thus, she turned her attention towards the Silver Goldhorns.

“Kill! Kill! Kill!” She flew next to the nearest Silver Goldhorn, then reached out towards it. Her giant alabaster fingers took a firm grip over the Silver Goldhorn, which howled and struggled fiercely. Alas, it was like a toy that had been firmly gripped by a pair of alabaster pincers. The nagapede clenched her fingers, causing cracks to appear throughout the surface of the Silver Goldhorn’s body.

Clack! Clack! Clack! BOOM! The Silver Goldhorn was crushed to death!

Ning raised an eyebrow when he saw this. “She’s strong.” The Sithe had brought only the most terrifyingly powerful creatures they had found and enslaved in the Infinite Void outside the Chaosverse. Every single one of these creatures possessed absolutely apocalyptic levels of power. Judging from the clench, this nagapede was clearly much stronger than even the Flamewing God. She might be able to rival even the Sithe Exalts!

“Kill! Kill!” She continued to growl this single word as she reached out once more, her fingers moving like a blur to latch onto yet another Silver Goldhorn. Her long, slender white fingers once more clenched tightly, shattering that second Silver Goldhorn.

She was going to kill and destroy everything she saw. By now, she no longer had any clarity of mind; she had gone completely mad. In fact, she had been driven mad and transformed into a creature that only lived for murder even before she had been sealed away by the Daoguard Tower.

“Poor woman.” Ning watched silently from afar as he continued to use his sword-light to keep the Silver Goldhorns at bay.

Time flowed on. Some of the Silver Goldhorns began to flee, but the Sword Dao Domain gave them nowhere to run. Ning drove each and every one of them towards the nagapede, which crushed all of them! There was no point in him subduing and collecting them, after all, to this very day, the cultivators were still unable to find a method for controlling the Silver Goldhorns.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! One of the stone pythons was captured by the nagapede, which latched onto it with both hands and tugged at it fiercely to no avail. The nagapede then lowered her head to bite the stone python. CRUNCH! This time, the stone python was broken into two halves.

After roughly the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, all of the Silver Goldhorns and both of the stone pythons had been slain by the titanic nagapede. As for Ning, thus far he had merely maintained his Sword Dao Domain without actually exchanging blows against the creature.

“Kill!” The nagapede focused her full attention upon the distant Ning and the Paragon of Pills. They were the only living creatures left in the region.

“Mistress, please enter my estate-world for a short while,” Ning said.

The Paragon knew that she couldn’t afford to be a distraction to Ning. She immediately said, “Be careful.” This was definitely the most terrifying creature she had ever seen. She had thought that the Silver Goldhorns were tough, but this giant ‘nagapede’ had crushed them like bugs.

“Don’t worry.” Ning waved his hand, collecting the Paragon into his estate-world.

“Kill! KILL! KILL!!!” the titanic nagapede howled, charging towards Ning. There was simply no way for the Sword Dao Domain to hold her back.

Clang! Ning drew a Northbow sword, then murmured softly to himself, “I hope I’m lucky enough to be able to get rid of her within three strikes.”

The giant nagapede scuttled forwards towards Ning, emanating an aura of earth-shaking power that was far more baleful than even the Blazesun Ruler’s. In the Infinite Void outside the Chaosverses, she had annihilated

an entire celestial body in just this manner. She definitely stood at the very apex of power amongst the creatures that resided in the Infinite Void, but upon being captured she had been converted into an insane beast that lived for slaughter.

Unfortunately for Ning, being in this Chaosverse hadn't lessened her power at all! This was because her power came from her own body, rather than the power of the Dao. As a result, there was virtually no difference in power between when she was in the Infinite Void and when she was in a Chaosverse.

Swoosh! A streak of dazzling golden sword-light appeared, swiping forwards in a completely unblockable manner. It pierced straight into the titanic nagapede's body, which was unable to impede it despite being extremely tough.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Sword-light appeared a total of six times inside of her body. Finally, she trembled and her eyes turned dim. Her gigantic body quickly began to shrink as it came to a halt in midair. A streak of light flew out from the injury to her chest. It was Ning, Northbow sword in hand.

"I had to attack a total of six times before I was able to land a fatal blow." Clink! Ning resheathed the Northbow sword back into the scabbard.

"Every part of this creature is an absolute treasure and has many uses." Ning waved his hand, pulling the giant body of the nagapede into his estate-world. Next, he released Azurefiend and the Paragon of Pills.

"Darknorth, just now I believe I saw the nagapede's corpse appear within your estate-world." The Paragon of Pills had a look of surprise and delight on her face when she appeared. She immediately inspected Ning carefully. "You disposed of it quite quickly. It seems you truly have reached an unfathomable level of power."

"Long ago, the Autarchs informed me of the weak spots these creatures possess. That made it much easier for me to deal with this one," Ning said. Only a fool would've engaged the creature in a 'proper' battle. These



creatures all had weak spots inside their bodies, but their outer shells were so tough that only Ning and the Autarchs were able to dispose of them with ease.

The short creature who had been in control of the Daoguard Tower had hoped that the powerful creature would be able to exhaust Ning and cause his death in such a manner. In truth, he couldn't be blamed for this belief. Amongst the Sithe, he was a low status servant who had never before encountered a Daolord who had failed the Daomerge yet was in control of an Eternal Omega Dao. He was operating on guesswork when he believed that the nagapede would be able to exhaust Ning, and indeed if Ning knew nothing at all about the nagapede then she really would've proven to be rather troublesome. The nagapede had been the short creature's only hope of dealing with Darknorth... but it had fallen far short.

"Darknorth, is it time to rescue Annihilation?" the Paragon of Pills asked.

"Not just yet. Right now, it'll be quite hard to break through those dimensions to rescue them," Ning said. The sealed dimensions had been rearranged to form the Dimensional Hallway Chains, which were extremely difficult to break through. "These dimensions were all extremely stable because they drew power from the Daoguard Tower. Now that the Daoguard Tower has been destroyed, they will be like rivers which are running dry. They won't be able to replenish any of the energy which they have used up. Eventually, they'll transform back into ordinary space which can be torn through with ease."

"Now... let's go take a look at what's inside the ruins of the Daoguard Tower." As Ning spoke, he began to fly towards the shattered remnants of the toppled Daoguard Tower.

# Chapter 9: Sweeping the Loot

Ji Ning, the Paragon of Pills, and Azurefiend flew over together. All eight floors of the tower had already crumbled apart, with the shattered remnants of the tower forming a pile of rubble atop a foundation of dirt that hovered there in space.

“Darknorth, why is it that the Daoguard Tower crumbled without you even attacking it?” The Paragon of Pills was puzzled. “I distinctly remember that it collapsed on its own.”

“This Daoguard Tower wasn’t all that strong; I expect that its owner was just a Hegemon,” Ning said. “It would be too difficult for him to personally subdue a nagapede like that, and so he used the entire Daoguard Tower to keep it sealed and suppressed! So long as the tower was in good shape, the creature would be unable to break free... but once the tower began to crumble, the nagapede would appear and massacre everything around it.”

The Paragon of Pills nodded slowly.

“Now, if this was an Exalt’s Daoguard Tower, we really would’ve been in much more trouble.” Ning let out a sigh. “Still, we’re merely in the outer perimeter of the Sithelands. Almost all of the Daoguard Towers owned by Sithe Exalts are located in the heartland.”

“The Sithe heartland?” The Paragon said, “I’ve visited the Sithelands on many occasions. I could sense that spacetime was in a state of complete disorder and that there were many places that were unexplored.”

“Those places were never meant for cultivators to challenge,” Ning said. Very few knew the true details and secrets behind the Dawn War. The Paragon of Pills naturally didn’t know the secrets either. Yes, she had learned a few things thanks to her crazy, repeated adventures within the Sithelands, but the heartland was a place which not even the Autarchs would dare trespass lightly.

Rumble... as Ning flew towards the toppled tower, his Sword Dao Domain rippled outwards, brushing away the pieces of rubble as he closely inspected the remains of the tower.

“Now this is a fun little toy.” Ning removed a dark red globe which had been affixed to one of the top floors. This globe was the object which had unleashed that terrifying attack of light.

“Once it accumulates and stores enough energy, it can unleash an attack of incredible power.” Ning chuckled. “This is a decent Sithe weapon, Mistress. Azurefiend, help me search through the rubble. I want to sweep this place clean.”

“Heh heh, my pleasure! Master, perhaps you would be willing to bestow some of the treasures you are uninterested in upon me,” Azurefiend said, a look of utter shamelessness on his wizened old features.

“Depends on my mood.” Ning chuckled. He wasn’t just going to give this shameless old man what he wanted.

“I’ve never encountered a Daoguard Tower before. In fact, I’ve never even heard of it before you mentioned it.” The Paragon of Pills was filled with curiosity as well. The dangers she had experienced here, especially the terrifying nagapede, had all served to ensure that she understood that this site was very different from the other Sithe ruins she had visited in the past.

The previous ruins she had scoured had been unoccupied. This time, she ran into one with a controller. If it hadn’t been for Ning, she truly would’ve been doomed this time.

Boom! Bang! Rip! Ning, Azurefiend, and the Paragon of Pills happily dismantled the remainders of the Daoguard Tower, taking out all usable Sithe artifacts and even a few unusable ones.

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Daoguard Towers were exclusively employed by extremely powerful Sithe, who placed many of their treasures inside the towers. Some of the weapons could even come together in incredibly powerful combinations.

During the previous battle, Ning hadn’t even entered the Daoguard tower. As a result, many of the powerful internal defenses hadn’t even been used! None of the external weapons were capable of killing Ning

from a distance of a billion kilometers. At this distance, Ning was able to dodge with ease even the quickest of attacks. Otherverse Lords might not be able to dodge, but Ning was a different story.

“Not bad.”

“This one is decent.”

“Now this hammer is scary powerful.” Ning and the other two continued to loot the tower, with Azurefiend and the Paragon of Pills occasionally testing out the items they found.

The Paragon of Pills was fairly blasé, as she had adventured through the Sithelands many times and already owned multiple Sithe weapons. Azurefiend, however, didn’t own any Sithe weapons at all. Even the suppressive black chains were merely on loan from Ning, who had yet to actually ‘gift’ them.

After spending a full hour combing through the ruins, the team completely looted the area clean. They even took many fragments which were completely unusable. They found a total of twenty-one usable Sithe weapons, and they all had different effects. Some were actually used to scry and scan.

“That is a lot of fine weapons,” Azurefiend said excitedly.

“We found so much treasure from this one site.” The Paragon of Pills was delighted as well.

Ning, however, was rather disappointed. “Is this it? This is much less than what I expected. We didn’t find a single major artifact at all.”

Realmslord Windgrace’s ‘Blacksun’, the castle that was used to defend the Three Realms, the city of Houwu in the Blazesun Domain, the Blazesun Ruler’s giant warship... all these counted as ‘major artifacts’. In contrast, the treasures which Ning had acquired after combing through the tower were all quite mediocre. There wasn’t even a single major artifact. All of the treasures combined were probably just barely on par with the Blacksun in value.

“This is already a good haul,” the Paragon of Pills said.

“No. According to the Autarchs’ records, even the most ordinary of Daoguard Towers would have more than this,” Ning said. “I suspected early on that the original owner of the Daoguard Tower had slipped away long ago. Now, I’m sure of it. The original owner must have taken the most valuable treasures out of the Daoguard Tower, leaving behind just the ones he was unable to physically remove from the tower itself.”

The Paragon of Pills cast a puzzled glance at the armor and items left behind by the deceased short creature. “Isn’t that dead Sithe the owner?”

“Probably not,” Ning said. “A mere roar from the nagapede was enough to transform him into dust. He probably wasn’t at the Hegemon level of power! Mistress, you might not know this, but amongst the Sithe only Hegemons can build Daoguard Towers. And, to be more precise, only an incredibly small fraction of Hegemons are qualified to do this.”

In the Sithe Chaosverse, weak Eternal Emperors were all permitted to build their own Daoguard towers... but here, they were invaders! They had invaded Ning’s Chaosverse, and their resources were extremely limited. Building Daoguard Towers was extremely difficult, and erecting a weak one was pointless. Thus, only the most supreme of Sithe Hegemons as well as the Sithe Exalts were permitted to build Daoguard Towers, which they used as focal points for massacring unsuspecting cultivators.

“Azurefiend, go and bind the estate-world that Sithe left behind. Let’s see if there are any interesting treasures inside of it,” Ning said.

“Right on.” Azurefiend excitedly flew over and began to bind the estate-world. Right now, he was on his absolute best behavior in front of Ning. This was partially due to Ning’s overwhelming power, partially to convince Ning to give him more pointers, and partially because he hoped that he might be lucky enough to receive a Sithe treasure reward from Ning.

“Whoah.” Azurefiend’s wizened old face suddenly twisted in shock, his eyes bulging out. “That is a LOT.”

“Wipe that freaky look off your face. What treasures does it hold?” Ning laughed.

“So all the treasures were hidden here! Master, take a look at all these

treasures!" Azurefiend waved his hand, causing a series of treasures to appear and levitate in the air before them. Light shone from the Paragon of Pills' eyes, and even the formerly-calm Ning revealed a look of shock.

Twenty... twenty-one... twenty-two... a total of twenty-nine treasures appeared before them. There were even TWO realmships in this cache!

"So all the good treasures were here." The Paragon of Pills let out an amazed sigh, then turned to stare with shock at a gray spear that was covered with a fiery red floral pattern. "Isn't that the Exterminatus Spear of the Almighty Seeker of Defeat?"

"The Exterminatus Spear?" Azurefiend was shocked as well. He stared intently at the spear, then said, "Paragon, are you sure? Is it possible that this is another, similar weapon?"

"There's no way I'm wrong about this. When the Almighty Seeker of Defeat first acquired this spear, it didn't have that red floral pattern on it. The Seeker added it later on. Supposedly, he put that fiery red floral pattern on every single weapon he used. The floral pattern probably had some sort of special meaning for him." The Paragon of Pills shook her head. "He died long ago, and I heard he died in the Sithelands. I never would've thought that he actually died here."

Ning nodded. "That explains it all. Most of these treasures were probably left behind by the cultivators who invaded this place over the course of many aeons. That short Sithe collected all of their treasures after killing them. I was wondering why there were TWO realmships in that estate-world. It seems that they came from slain cultivators."

The Paragon of Pills let out a sigh.

"Mistress, take whatever you need," Ning said with a laugh.

"To be honest, these are of no use to me." The Paragon of Pills looked at Ning. "Darknorth, I think you know what I want above all else. As for these treasures? Even if I took all of them, they probably still wouldn't be enough to convince an Autarch to help me out."

# Chapter 10: Space Sword Dao

“I have a request to make. I know it is a bit excessive, but I truly am out of options.” The Paragon of Pills looked at Ji Ning. “I have no choice but to shamelessly ask you to help me out, Darknorth. Please ask an Autarch to revive those three brothers of mine.”

The Paragon of Pills rarely begged others. She was, by nature, an extremely proud person. However, reviving her three brothers was virtually her entire reason for existence, something which she wanted above everything else. It was much like how Ning desperately wished to be able to revive his wife Yu Wei!

The Paragon of Pills had repeatedly risked her life in diving into the Sithe ruins, but she still wasn't even close to having as much treasure as the Autarch had demanded for his aid. The Autarch had asked for a thousand realmships worth of treasure! This was an incredible request, so high as to cause her to feel despair. This was why she had become even more crazed in her pursuit of treasure.

Now, she was able to sense hope when she looked at Ning. She viewed Ning as she would a son, and in her heart she truly didn't want to ask this of him. However, she really was out of options. Thus, she had 'shamelessly' begged him for help.

“Mistress.” Ning knew how the Paragon of Pills felt. He smiled. “Mistress, don't worry. I'll definitely go ask the Autarchs to help out. I can't speak on their behalf, but I can say that there is a 90% chance they'll agree.”

“90% chance?” The Paragon's heart swelled with indescribable excitement. Even her face turned ruddy.

She had been waiting for far, far too long. For the sake of this goal, she had nearly driven herself insane. In pursuit of this goal, she had accomplished many things which were viewed as miracles. When she had first gained eternity, she was an ordinary Eternal Emperor, not a Hegemon... but she had managed to slowly train to the Hegemon level,

then reach incredibly high levels of skill in many different Daos. All of this was for the sake of reviving her three brothers.

Ning smiled upon seeing this. The reason why he had said there was a 90% chance was merely because he hadn't actually asked any of the Autarchs yet. In truth, Ning knew that the Autarchs were desperately looking for ways to help him out in order to express their gratitude. Bring something back to life? This was a fairly minor ask. So long as it was possible, the Autarchs would definitely agree!

"Once we leave the Sithelands, I'll immediately ask the Autarchs to help out," Ning said.

"Darknorth." The Paragon of Pills' entire aura seemed to have transformed. In the past, she was incomparably cold and remote... but now, a hint of lively fire seemed to course through her.

"Haha. Now, Mistress, can you go ahead and choose the treasures you want?" Ning said.

"I already have multiple Sithe weapons. A few more won't make much of a difference," the Paragon refused. She felt that she had already taken too much advantage of Ning. She couldn't accept any further gifts.

Seeing this, Ning nodded. "Ah, but you don't have a realmship yet, right?"

The Paragon blinked.

"Realmships make life much more convenient. Take this one." Ning waved his hand, sending a realmship to float in front of the Paragon of Pills.

The Paragon of Pills no longer held back. She immediately said, "Fine, I'll accept this." She truly did feel as though destiny was a marvelous thing. When she had led Ning to the Trileaf Realm, he was just a child... and now, this child had completely changed her destiny.

"This suit of armor can be used to cover your entire body. It is highly defensive, but it'll also increase your attack power dramatically. It's quite multifunctional. With this by your side, you should be able to survive even



an enraged Otherverse Lord.” Ning waved his hand, choosing a heavy suit of coppery red armor and sending it over to Azurefiend.

Azurefiend was rather stunned. He truly did badly desire a Sithe treasure, but he himself felt that he had done too little for Ning to warrant one yet. He felt a bit embarrassed to be given one.

“Master, I’ll accept it.” Azurefiend had a solemn look on his face. “I’ve been alive for so many years, but I never had a Sithe weapon to call my own. I, Azurefiend, shall never forget your benevolence, Master.”

In his heart, Azurefiend silently decided that although his master would one day perish, he would continue to safeguard his master’s family and friends.

“It is just a toy to me. No need to get too emotional.” Ning waved his hand, collecting all of the other treasures. He didn’t really care about them, because his original plan had been to wait until the later stages of his truesoul’s disintegration before doing a bit of adventuring in the Sithelands. Since he was already here, he was going to continue wandering through the Sithelands after asking the Autarchs to revive the Paragon of Pills’ three brothers.

In other words, he would have plenty more treasures coming his way! Hegemons might have to risk their lives to acquire Sithe treasures, but Ning was able to acquire them with ease.

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After fully looting the Daoguard Tower, Ning turned to stare at the many dimensional hallways barring their path. “These dimensional hallways have been completely sealed off. For now, there’s no way out. If I used all my power, it would take me ten or twenty sword-strikes to carve a path open for us, but it really isn’t worth it. Now that the Daoguard Tower has been destroyed, they no longer have a power source and will quickly use up the little energy they have.”

Rumble... his awesome Sword Dao Domain descended and began to furiously smash against the distant dimensional hallways. The criss-crossing hallways were able to endure the assault, but flickers of light

began to appear on their surfaces. Clearly, they were using up a great deal of power to resist.

“Master, how long will it take?” Azurefiend asked curiously.

“How should I know?” Ning laughed. “Less than a chaos cycle.”

Ning was able to keep his Sword Dao Domain continuously activated. It drew from the power of the Chaosverse itself; not one iota of Ning’s own energies were consumed. It would last for as long as he wanted it to last! While doing so, Ning began a period of silent meditation and cultivation, as did the Paragon of Pills and Azurefiend.

Time flowed on, one year after another. The dimensional hallways continued to hold firm; clearly, they had been infused with quite a bit of power. Over eight million years went by in the blink of an eye.

Rumble... a ripple suddenly spread out with Ning at its center. The Paragon of Pills and Azurefiend were seated in the lotus position atop boulders within the tower ruins, and they both opened their eyes as the ripple washed past them. They both felt a thrill of fear go down their spine, and both sighed at how incredible Darknorth was! One was Ning’s retainer, while the other was essentially one of Ning’s teachers, but both marveled at how unfathomably powerful he had become.

At their level, they couldn’t even truly understand how terrifying Ning’s Sword Dao was. Just the tiniest bit of leakage from its aura was enough to cause them to feel fear. When that invisible ripple washed past them, they felt as though invisible blades were slicing at their bodies.

“The Space Sword Dao.” Ning opened his eyes, then reached out with his hand. Whoosh! An ethereal sword appeared above the palm of his hand, emanating ripples of dimensional power.

Prior to coming here, Ning had spent three thousand chaos cycles wandering the Chaosverse with his daughter and had nearly finished infusing his Dao of Space into his Eternal Omega Sword Dao. After seeing the dimensional hallways, he gained new insights into the Dao of Space. This sped up the infusion process, allowing him to break through and master his Space Sword Dao.

The Space Sword Dao was highly suited for dimensional travel, allowing him to tear through space like it was nothing more than tofu.

From this day forth, the amount of distance he could travel when he used his sword to tear through space would skyrocket. The Autarch of Annihilation, 'Autarch Ekong', was not particularly skilled in the Dao of Space, and so he wouldn't be able to travel as far or as fast as Ning!

Ning had reached the Hegemonic level in the Dao of Space long ago, after all. Now, he had infused it all into his Sword Dao and formed the Space Sword Dao.

"Mastering the Space Sword Dao clearly took much more time than the Lightning Sword Dao or the Five Elements Sword Dao." Ning shook his head to himself. "But the further down this road I go, the more time will be needed. I just don't have enough time."

With each improvement, Ning could sense that his foundation was broadening and that he was getting slightly closer to success. Ning felt certain that if he had enough time, he had a very good chance of reaching the ultimate pinnacle via this route.

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Another half-million years went by after Ning mastered the Space Sword Dao.

Finally... Crack! Crack! Crack! The dimensional hallways that had been for many years just barely able to endure Ning's sword-light finally began to twist, shudder, and crack.

Looks of delight appeared on the faces of Ning, Azurefiend, and the Paragon of Pills.

"Haha, we've finally broken through!" Azurefiend grinned. "I thought that we'd actually spend an entire chaos cycle here."

"I'm impressed it managed to last as long as it did. I kept my Sword Dao Domain active this entire time, assaulting them without pause, but they still managed to last for many years. Honestly, if I used the brute-force method, I don't think twenty blows of the sword would've been enough. I

probably would've had to kill myself," Ning said with a laugh. As he spoke, some of the dimensional hallways began to completely break apart and collapse.

Countless dimensional hallways began to break apart and crumble. The Dimensional Hallway Lock was an extremely complicated technique which not even Ning could solve, despite his mastery of the Space Sword Dao... but now that its energies had been exhausted, it was still going to crumble.

Soon, all of the dimensional hallways vanished without a trace, leaving behind just a few pocket dimensions which hovered in the skies like lonely little islands.

Thanks to the karmic lines tying them together, Ning knew exactly which pocket dimension Lord Annihilation was in.

"Let's see what the other dimensions hold," Ning said with a laugh. With but a thought, he sent out countless streams of sword-light to surround and assault the hundreds of pocket dimensions, piercing through them to reveal what lay within.

# Chapter 11: Tamed

Ji Ning, the Paragon of Pills, and Azurefiend all stared at the pocket dimensions as the streaks of sword-light pierced through them. They instantly saw that two of them held the two companions of the Paragon. One held Lord Annihilation, whose eyes were filled with murderous bloodlust. The other was filled with a gray-robed woman who had silvery hair.

Lord Annihilation raised his head to stare at the outside world, a murderous look in his eyes. The gray-robed woman turned to stare at Ning as well.

“Annihilation!” the Paragon of Pills barked coldly. “Wake up!”

Lord Annihilation’s gaze slowly returned to his normal calm. Swoosh! Swoosh! Both he and the gray-robed woman immediately flew out of their pocket dimensions.

“Thank you, Paragon of Pills. Thank you, Daolord Darknorth.” Lord Annihilation had a delighted look on his face and behaved with tremendous respect.

“What was going on just now?” Ning was rather surprised.

“Annihilation was being constantly assaulted by illusions. Every so often, he’d be drawn into a berserk state,” the Paragon said. “However, each time he would eventually regain his clarity of mind after giving vent to his rage.”

Lord Annihilation said in a rather embarrassed manner, “But the amount of time I was able to remain clear-minded was slowly shrinking. If I was trapped for a few hundred more chaos cycles, I probably would’ve completely lost myself to the madness. I only escaped that fate because you saved me, Daolord Darknorth.”

Ning continued to keep his Sword Dao Domain active, using it to scan through the secrets of that dimensional pocket. He couldn’t help but secretly sigh in amazement at what he found. The illusions had been set

up in a truly intricate and marvelous way which would allow them to silently and soundlessly penetrate a prisoner's defenses, then affect his mind. However, Ning suspected that many of the formations in this Daoguard Tower had not been personally set down by the master of the tower.

The Sithe had major powers who specialized in formations or artificing. They would mass produce these things, then auction them off. The 'Dimensional Hallway Lock', for example, was something which only a Sithe Exalt could create.

"Tia greets you, Daolord Darknorth." The silvery-haired gray-robed woman flew over and bowed respectfully.

Ning knew that this woman was viewed by many as being just as 'crazy' as the Paragon of Pills. She often went adventuring in the Sithelands. However, she was different from the Paragon, who was more distant and cold. Hegemon Tia was calm and tranquil, as though nothing could cause a stir in her soul. She was someone who would react calmly to anything and everything. Even if she herself was about to die, she would respond with this calm equanimity.

"Master, look over there." Azurefiend pointed towards a distant pocket dimension.

Ning, the Paragon, Tia, and Lord Annihilation all turned to look. This was a dimension filled with black mist. Inside, there was a towering mountain that had a beautiful palace located at the very peak. There were even a few servants in front of the palace.

"It seems rather lavish. I imagine that's where the Sithe normally resided," Ning said. "Come, let's go take a look." Ning's group quickly flew through the air towards that floating pocket dimension.

The palace was quite beautiful. Some servants were busy keeping it clean, while others were standing watch. As soon as Ning's group landed, they all bowed respectfully and called out: "Masters." All of them, however, seemed rather puzzled.

"They are all Daolords." The Paragon of Pills was rather startled. She

asked, "You've never met any of us. Why do you call us 'Masters'?"

The servants exchanged glances, rather nervous. The Paragon of Pills frowned. "You were able to become Daolords. How is it that you are this spineless?" She pointed at the old Daolord who seemed to be the most powerful. "You. Answer my question."

The old man said respectfully, "Everyone who comes here is a 'Master'. We are eternal servants."

Ning stared intently at them, scrying the pasts of these servants. These Daolords all felt rather terrified when they saw Ning staring at them like this. They felt as though this white-robed Daolord was able to completely see through them. This sensation caused their hearts to quiver.

"They all used to live within the estate-world." Ning sighed. "Afterwards, they were chosen by the Sithe to come here and serve. All of them have been trained to be incredibly obedient."

"Since when were Daolords so easily tamed?" Azurefiend was rather surprised. Most Samsara Daolords would rather die than submit.

"Not just Daolords. Even Hegemons have been tamed." Ning couldn't help but sigh. When he scried the pasts of these Daolords, he was also able to see some other information regarding this palace.

"All of you, come out!" Ning barked, sending out his Sword Dao Domain to press down upon every inch of the palace. The formerly-quiet palace suddenly changed, with five figures flying out of it like streaks of light. All of them had awesome auras of power. They were all either Hegemons or Otherverse Lords, and their eyes were completely dead and devoid of all emotion.

"This is Master's estate. How dare you trespass here?" The five figures were filled with malevolence.

"Are you... Lord Starbearer?" The Paragon of Pills was able to recognize one of the Otherverse Lords.

"Brother Skypillar?" Hegemon Azurefiend called out in shock, "Y-you... do you recognize me?"

“Azurefiend?” A red-haired man replied coldly, “Of course I recognize you. However, this is my master’s territory. Now that you have come here, you must die.”

“Kill!” All five figures quickly charged forwards, seeking to slay Ning and the others.

“Freeze!” Ning commanded softly. Instantly, four of the five charging figures were completely paralyzed by the suppressive might of Ning’s Sword Dao Domain. Only the Otherverse Lord who the Paragon had called ‘Lord Starbearer’ was able to continue his charge towards Ning, thanks to his entire body being covered by the power of his otherverse. However, Ning was able to send out incredibly powerful blows of sword-light to keep him at bay with ease.

“Azurefiend, chain him down,” Ning commanded.

“Yes, Master!” Azurefiend had been patiently waiting for a good opportunity. When he saw Ning knock down Lord Starbearer with a streak of sword-light, Azurefiend immediately attacked with all six black chains. He quickly bound Lord Starbearer in layers of chains, ensuring that he was no longer able to move at all.

“Brother Skypillar, what’s wrong with you? We journeyed together and adventured together. Have you forgotten?” Hegemon Azurefiend couldn’t believe that this good friend of his would attack him. He had wandered through many places, and Hegemon Skypillar was someone he counted amongst his life-and-death friends.

“All who offend Master must die!” the bound Hegemon Skypillar said through clenched teeth, a frenzied look on his face. As for the others... their eyes remained completely dead, but they also had berserk looks on their faces. They truly wanted to kill Ning and his team.

Ning suddenly understood what was going on. He let out a sigh. “Although they kept their memories, they’ve already lost their sense of self. They’ve been tamed and transformed into a type of special Sithe golem.”

“Golem?” The Paragon of Pills and the others didn’t understand.



“Their bodies were unchanged and they kept all their powers and memories... but they’ve completely lost their id, their ego, their sense of self. They are like golems in that they will simply do whatever their master commands. They will obey any order their master gives them,” Ning explained. “They might be ‘alive’, but in reality they are like golems. Those two stone pythons who attacked me earlier were also living creatures who were transformed into golems.”

Most golems were created via magic treasures. The Sithe, however... they were able to convert living beings into golems.

“For all intents and purposes, they died long ago.” Ning looked at the five powerful cultivators, sighing at the savage, murderous look on their faces. “Let us grant them rest at long last.”

Slash. Slash. Slash. Slash. Slash.

All five were ground to dust by Ning’s sword-light. Even Lord Starbearer was slain, due to the black chains suppressing his power and preventing him from fighting back.

A look of heart-ache and grief was on Azurefiend’s old face.

“Hegemons and Otherverse Lords can be transformed into golems?” The Paragon of Pills shook her head.

“It is extremely difficult to convert powerful creatures into golems, and the stronger their Dao-heart is the better. For these five to have been converted is a sign that their Dao-hearts simply weren’t strong enough. In addition, the conversion process requires an extremely long period of time. The process has to be slow and gradual, without the cultivators even noticing anything. If the cultivators knew that their terrifying fate was to be transformed into golems, they would probably commit suicide instead. That’s why the process has to be gradual; not the slightest bit of haste is acceptable! By the time the cultivator realizes what has happened, it is already too late,” Ning said. This was part of the information which the Autarchs had provided to him.

Lord Annihilation was greatly shocked by this. “Then when I was being repeatedly assaulted by those illusions... was that part of the taming and

transforming process?”

“Most likely, yes.” Ning nodded.

“I could sense some charming spells aimed at me in my pocket dimension as well,” the Paragon of Pills said. “But I just stayed there without daring to move anywhere. It didn’t seem to affect me much.”

“Given how strong your Dao-heart is, Mistress, there is no way the Sithe would’ve been able to convert you.” Ning glanced at the palace. “I can sense that this palace holds quite a few prisoners inside. Almost all of them are Daolords who refused to obey orders, which is why they were imprisoned and tortured by that short Sithe. I can also sense that a Hegemon has been imprisoned there as well. Most likely, the taming process failed with him.”

# Chapter 12: Grand Dimensional Formation

Ji Ning waved a finger from afar. Rumble... Ning's Sword Dao Domain actually forcibly excavated the entire prison beneath the palace, causing it fly outwards before settling upon the ground with a boom. The prison cages all shattered apart, revealing the imprisoned Daolords who were inside, all of whom looked to be in terrible shape.

The largest cell had been used to imprison a black-haired man who had a single horn on his head. His hair was tousled, and his entire body was covered with a spiderweb of countless scars.

The black-haired man raised his head and stared towards Ning. His gaze was cold and resolute, as though nothing could shake his will at all.

"Eh?" A puzzled look appeared in his eyes. "The Paragon of Pills? Hegemon Tia?" the black-haired man said in a low, hoarse voice. He recognized these two 'madwomen' who often visited the Sithelands.

"Brother Flameleft?" Hegemon Tia was startled.

"Flameleft, you are still alive?!" The Paragon of Pills was shocked as well.

Ning glanced at the mechanisms and barriers used to chain the black-haired man. He immediately sent out streaks of sword-light that quickly shattered them to bits. With those barriers gone, Hegemon Flameleft regained his power and the wounds on his body quickly vanished. Black robes appeared over his body, and he turned to stare at Ning in a rather puzzled manner.

He could sense that this white-robed Daolord in front of him was incredibly terrifying; the sword-light the Daolord had created was capable of slaying him with ease. And yet, the man was clearly just a Daolord who had failed the Daomerge!

"Hegemon Flameleft, this is Daolord Darknorth," Lord Annihilation said hurriedly. "We all owe our very lives to Daolord Darknorth. He is so strong that he treats with Autarchs as equals; not even the Sithe Exalts can compare to him in power."

Hegemon Flameleft instantly realized just how incredibly powerful Daolord Darknorth was.

“Flameleft thanks you, Daolord, for saving my life.” Hegemon Flameleft hurriedly bowed respectfully, a grateful look in his eyes. “Flameleft shall never forget the grace you have shown me today.”

No one would ever know how much torment and misery he had suffered. On multiple occasions, he had very nearly broken down. All the others who had been captured had committed suicide early on. Those who didn’t commit suicide in time would see their divine power and Immortal energy sealed away, making future suicide impossible! They were imprisoned and suffered countless torments that were truly indescribable.

Suicide was no longer an option, and they had only two options before them. The first was to submit and become a puppet. The second was to continue resisting. In the end, the only one who managed to continue resisting was Flameleft.

The Autarchs who had seen this in the past actually drew from it, using it as an inspiration for their idea of torturing Sithe Exalts in the hopes that they would finally give up and allow their truesouls and souls to be infiltrated. That way, once the Sithe Exalts died, their truesoul fragments would be absorbed and swallowed by Ning’s Chaosverse.

The Sithe Exalts had nearly been driven mad from the torture, but they clearly were still capable of enduring it.

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“Flameleft, were any of your weapons stolen by the Sithe? I already killed the Sithe who ran this place and have all of his treasures,” Ning said. He felt a great deal of admiration for Hegemon Flameleft; the man had been able to endure for so very long, even though there was no visible hope whatsoever! This was no easy feat.

“I didn’t have many powerful weapons,” Hegemon Flameleft said. “The only good weapon I had was that axe I always used.”

Ning immediately waved his hand, causing a series of axes to appear

before him. There were six in total, and one of them voluntarily flew over to Hegemon Flameleft. Hegemon Flameleft excitedly grasped the axe. The axe itself was shivering!

“It wasn’t easy for you to stay alive,” Ning said with a laugh. “Stay safe and avoid the Sithelands unless you have a compelling reason to be here.”

“Understood.” Hegemon Flameleft was the type of person who always repaid his debts to others. Ning had saved his life, and so he privately swore that he would definitely do everything he could to repay Ning.

“This bracelet is an interesting Sithe trinket. It won’t make you much stronger, but it’ll be useful to you whenever you need to flee.” Ning waved his hand, tossing out a Sithe bracelet. “Don’t be shy and just take it. I feel quite a bit of admiration for you, to tell you the truth.”

Hegemon Flameleft hesitated slightly.

“Brother Flameleft, just accept it,” Hegemon Tia said, as did the Paragon of Pills. Both of them knew that Daolord Darknorth had completely surpassed all other cultivators and was virtually a peer of the Autarchs. Most Sithe artifacts were truly useless to him, while the Three Realms only needed some of the more important ones.

Besides... if Ning really did need Sithe weapons, he could go to any of the ruins and acquire a mountain of them.

“Thank you, Daolord.” Flameleft wasn’t the wishy-washy type, and so he offered a simple thanks while firmly engraving Ning’s kindness into his heart.

“It’s time for us to leave.” Ning glanced at the surrounding area. Daoguard Towers were absolute nightmares for other cultivators, but they wouldn’t be that bad for him if it wasn’t for the fact that his truesoul was constantly crumbling. He had been forced to attack several times here, resulting in his lifespan lessening by quite a bit.

Whoosh. Ning and the others immediately soared into the skies, flying into the endless black mist outside the lonely dimensional islands. After flying for a short period of time, they flew out of it and reached the empty

void outside of it.

Ding!

An extremely pleasing sound suddenly spread out from very far away in spacetime. Ning's face hardened slightly as he swept the area with his gaze. Ever since he had mastered the Space Sword Dao, his attunement towards space had become extremely acute. He saw that far off in the distant, there was a total of nine 'corners' which held enormous hidden regions within them. Now, all nine corners had suddenly begun to emanate dazzling light.

"What's wrong, Darknorth?" The Paragon of Pills, Azurefiend, and the others were all puzzled.

"Let's get out of here right away!" Just as the words were leaving Ning's lips, space began to twist around them.

Whoosh! The nine distant 'specks' of light resonated together to generate a grand dimensional formation that instantly swept across the region Ning was in, forming a black hole that sucked all of them inside.

A heartbeat later, everything grew calm again. Aside from the fact that Ning's group had just vanished, everything seemed completely ordinary and unperturbed.

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Ning's group reappeared within a blurry region filled by clouds and mist.

"Where are we?" the Paragon of Pills said as they all scanned the region.

"My godsense has been suppressed. I'm unable to see anything at all," Lord Annihilation said hurriedly.

Ning scanned the area silently. His face was even more solemn than it had been during their battles at the Daoguard Tower.

"What a terrifying formation, and what a terrifying level of mastery over the Dao of Space!" Ning murmured softly. Just now, he had been able to witness with great clarity how they had been forcibly teleported into this place. Those nine incomparably distant and vast dimensions had joined

together into an enormous formation of dazzling profundity. This was a level of mastery over space which left Ning breathless. Nobody in their entire Chaosverse was capable of such a thing!

“Darknorth, where are we?” the Paragon of Pills asked.

“Still in Sithe territory,” Ning said heavily. “But this place is probably a hundred times deadlier than the Daoguard Tower we were in.” Although they had arrived just a short while ago, the hints which Ning saw allowed him to quickly understand how dangerous a situation they were in.

“Autarch Titanos. Autarch Ekong...” Ning immediately began to reach out through the message-talismans to all six Autarchs.

“Darknorth.”

“What’s wrong, Darknorth?”

The Autarchs scattered throughout the Chaosverse all immediately responded to Ning, including Autarch Mogg who was responsible for standing watch over the Sithelands. This was the very first time Ning had ever used the message-talisman to contact them.

“There is something I need some assistance with,” Ning sent through the talisman. “I am in the Sithelands and broke through a Daoguard Tower to save some cultivators, but just as I was about to leave I was forcibly teleported elsewhere by a formation of incredible power. This formation was established by linking together nine enormous dimensions and was incredibly complex; I believe it has surpassed the limits of what cultivators in our Chaosverse can accomplish. My companions and I are now trapped here, and we are afraid to recklessly move around.”

“Darknorth, stay right where you are.”

“Stay there and don’t move.” The Autarchs quickly began to send their replies. In dangerous places, the more you moved around the quicker you would die.

“Don’t worry. I’m not going anywhere. I could sense danger as soon as I arrived. If I tried to escape on my own, I’d probably end up dying here. I don’t really care about my own life, as my truesoul is already breaking

down, but someone extremely important to me is here as well as a few other cultivators,” Ning sent. He truly didn’t wish for the Paragon of Pills to die.

“Our avatars are all standing watch over the Sithelands,” Autarch Titanos said. “I’ll have my avatar meet up with Mogg’s and we’ll work together on this.”

Autarchs had incredibly powerful avatars, as they were generally outfitted with many mighty weapons. Most Autarch avatars had nearly 80% of the true body’s power!



# Chapter 13: The Hidden Dimension

Although the Sithe heartlands had been completely sealed off, they continued to represent a disaster waiting to happen to the cultivator civilizations! Thus, Autarch Mogg eternally stood watch over this place, as did his avatar and the avatars of all five other Autarchs.

Riiiiip! Space twisted, resulting in a dazzling tunnel of light appearing. Two figures emerged shoulder-to-shoulder from this tunnel of light, with one being the bald red-robed avatar of Autarch Titanos, and the other being a Tall, skinny, azure-robed man who had some scales on his cheeks. The second man was Autarch Mogg, and his eyes were flecked with azure light.

The two stepped out of the tunnel of light and entered normal space. “Darknorth, we’ve already arrived. Let Mogg and I investigate this place first.” Autarch Titanos glanced at the distant region, filled with a billowing black fog which surrounded many pocket dimensions that floated in the air. This was the place where the Paragon of Pills had been trapped previously.

“Alright.” Ji Ning waited from the separate dimension he had been teleported to. Now that the two Autarchs had arrived, he felt a sense of hope.

The reason these two had arrived was because of the specific Daos they followed. Autarch Mogg walked the path of the Space Daobirth Essence and was the Autarch with the greatest amount of control over space. This was why he was responsible for standing guard over the Sithelands; if anything happened, he would be able to sense it thanks to his dimensional mastery.

As for Autarch Titanos, his path was that of the Karma Daobirth Essence, an even more incredible Dao! He had met Ning twice, and as a result the two were connected by karma. It was possible that he would be able to sense Ning’s location thanks to the karma which bound them together.

The avatars of Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos scanned the area vigilantly. “Mogg, what do you think?” Autarch Titanos asked.

“Wait a moment,” Autarch Mogg said, his azure eyes scanning the void around them. Although the grand dimensional formation was now dormant, there were still some traces of its previous activation which allowed Autarch Mogg to calculate some of the secrets behind it.

Space trembled and rippled before his gaze. Suddenly, he stared off into the distance, then turned to look at several other locations as well. Frowning, he said, “Darknorth was right. This formation was activated from nine separate locations, each of which is incredibly far away. This formation is marvelously intricate, and its usage of dimensional mastery far surpasses my own.”

“I cannot find the dimension Darknorth and his team have been teleported to.” Autarch Mogg shook his head. “What about you, Titanos?”

“Darknorth’s too far away. I can’t find him via just karma alone.” Autarch Titanos frowned as well.

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Clouds lazily drifted nearby. Ning’s group remained atop the clouds, not daring to move about rashly.

“Darknorth, we’re unable to find the exact place you have been trapped,” Autarch Titanos replied. “Our only option is to have your Primaltwin come over here as well. Your Primaltwin should be able to sense your true body, allowing it to find you.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded.

“Mogg will head straight to the Flamedragon Realmverse and bring your Primaltwin over here,” Autarch Titanos stated. “The place you have been imprisoned in is most likely an extremely important Sithe nexus point. Given that we didn’t even know it existed, it has to be an incredibly dangerous place to be in. Don’t move about rashly; just stay there and wait for us.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not so rash as to run around wildly,” Ning sent back.

The two sides then broke off the connection.

Ning was starting to feel rather grim. Autarch Titanos was skilled in karma, while Autarch Mogg was skilled in space, yet neither was able to locate him. This meant the formation which teleported him here was truly incredible!

“How did it go, Darknorth?” The Paragon of Pills looked at Ning.

“Don’t worry, everything will be fine. We’ll wait right here. The Autarchs are already on their way, but the place we’re in is fairly stable. It’ll probably take them a bit of time,” Ning said.

Hegemon Tia, Hegemon Flameleft, and the others were all secretly astonished. Daolord Darknorth truly was incredible; as soon as he was trapped here, Autarchs hastened over to help him out. The words ‘the Autarchs are already on their way’ clearly indicated that more than one Autarch had come. Since when were Autarchs so amenable to helping out ordinary cultivators?!

“Why did the Sithe establish this secret location?” Ning glanced at the surrounding area. Thanks to his incredible insight, he was able to vaguely see a vast sea off in the distance. He was quite curious as to what this realm contained, but he knew that if he indulged it too much it would be the death of him. He couldn’t be rash; it was best to wait for the Autarchs to come.

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It took Autarch Mogg a mere month to find Ning’s black-robed Primaltwin, then bring it all the way over to the Sithelands.

The black-robed Primaltwin Ning was currently standing next to Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos in the air.

“My true body and the other cultivators were teleported away from that location right there.” The black-robed Ning pointed to an area of space, then pointed towards nine different directions. “The nine different sources of that dimensional formation came from those nine directions. All of them were located extremely far away.”

“That’s exactly what I sensed as well.” Autarch Mogg nodded. He had been in a rather contemplative state ever since he had discovered the dimensional formation. Clearly, he had been pondering over this formation.

“Darknorth, where is your true body?” Autarch Titanos asked.

“I can sense its location.” Ning nodded. “I’d like to ask you to help me lead the way, Autarch Mogg.”

Autarch Mogg led the way in carving through space, while Ning’s Primaltwin guided him in his path. After spending the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, they had traversed the equivalent of five or six realmverses.

“Halt!”

They had reached a region of empty darkness which held nothing at all. The black-robed Ning stood there in the void, slowly moving forwards and warping through ten billion kilometers of space with each step he took.

Forward. Back. Up. Down. Ning seemed to be walking in circles, while the avatars of Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos watched from afar.

“Now that’s odd.” The black-robed Ning scanned the area. “Autarch Mogg, Autarch Titanos, I can clearly sense that my true body is within a hundred billion kilometers of us! And yet, I’ve discovered that no matter where I go, I cannot move any closer to it. Just now, I even tried to enter other dimensional continuums but still remained unable to move closer to my true body.”

“A hundred billion kilometers?” Autarch Titanos glanced at Autarch Mogg. “Mogg, what do you think?”

A hundred billion kilometers was a very short amount of distance to figures like Autarchs and Ning; a single step through spacetime was more than enough to traverse such a distance. And yet, Ning’s Primaltwin was able to sense his true body’s location but was completely unable to move any closer to it.

“There is an enormous hidden dimension here.” Autarch Mogg scanned the area, his eyes shooting out rays of blurry azure light which caused

space to twist and distort. He said calmly, "This gigantic dimension is extremely well-made and perfectly separated from the outside world. No matter what you try, you won't be able to move a single step closer to this dimension."

It was similar to mortals walking on Ning's old world of 'Earth'. No matter how much time they spent walking on Earth's surface, they would never be able to move any closer to Earth's core. By the same principle, Ning was completely unable to move closer to this hidden region.

"It is absolutely perfect. Although I can vaguely sense that it is here, I can't find any flaws in its creation at all which would allow me to lock onto it," Autarch Mogg said. "If the teleportation formation was to activate again and bring another outsider here, I would be able to detect its location during the teleportation process and then open a dimensional tunnel to it. Right now, though, it is completely hidden and sealed away from us. There's nothing I can do."

"I have to somehow activate it a second time?" The black-robed Ning felt a bit frustrated.

"This dimensional tunnel has completely blocked off karma itself. I can't locate Darknorth's true body through karma either." Autarch Titanos looked at Ning. "Darknorth, I'm ashamed to say this, but neither of us will be able to solve this problem in a short amount of time. I'll have Ekong and the others come test it out as well. Perhaps one of them will succeed."

"It'll be fine even if you cannot. I might be trapped inside, but not just anyone can bring harm to me," the black-robed Ning said. "I'll figure something out."

"Be careful." Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg felt rather guilty. They knew that if even the two of them were helpless, it was unlikely the other four would succeed; Autarch Skyfeeder was skilled in the Dao of Time, Autarch Ekong was skilled in the Dao of Destruction, Autarch Bolin was skilled in the Dao of the Claw, and Autarch Stonerule was skilled in the Dao of Illusions.

"The reason my true body entered the Sithelands was to save someone;

the Paragon of Pills,” Ning said. “The Mistress wishes to revive her three brothers, one of whom is a Hegemon of the Dao of the Sword.”

“Oh, the Paragon of Pills? I know of her.” Autarch Titanos nodded. “She sought me out, and I told her to come back after she had a thousand realmships worth of treasure.”

Ning said, “Autarch Titanos, I’d like to ask you to help the Mistress complete this dream of hers.”

“A minor matter,” Autarch Titanos said. “But the otherverse she resides in was created by Autarch Skyfeeder. I’ll have her handle this personally. It’ll be much easier for her to keep that otherverse safe while reversing spacetime to revive those three.”

This task was indescribably difficult for Hegemons, but to Autarchs it was nothing more than a bit of extra effort.

“Darknorth, you have to be careful inside there,” Autarch Mogg said solemnly. “We originally thought that we had taken full control over the Sithelands’s perimeter, sealing away the few places we didn’t breach... but clearly, we were wrong. There are hidden areas we were not aware of! I imagine that the Sithe have been watching us in secret, biding their time.”

“Don’t worry. Even if a Sithe Exalt comes, I’ll kill him with a blow from my sword,” Ning said with a smile.

.....

Within that blurry, cloud-filled region. The white-robed Ning said to the Paragon of Pills, “Mistress, I’ve already spoken to the Autarchs. Autarch Skyfeeder will personally revive your three brothers.”

Tears appeared in the Paragon’s eyes, and her entire body began to tremble. Finally, two tears fell down... but a smile was on her face.

This solitary, glacially cold woman was actually, finally smiling. Her smile was radiant and beautiful, and even Ning was rather stunned by it. This was beauty that stemmed from the depths of a soul, beauty and joy which was truly infectious.

“Thank you, Darknorth.” The Paragon of Pills looked at Ning.

# Chapter 14: The Island Battle

Many people knew of the 'Mad Paragon of Pills', including Azurefiend, Hegemon Tia, Hegemon Flameleft, and Lord Annihilation. They all knew how frenzied she could be in the pursuit of her dream... and now, it was finally going to be realized. They could imagine the emotional upheaval she felt! This was a happier moment for her than succeeding in the Daomerge had been. The joy she felt surpassed even life and death!

"Congratulations, Paragon of Pills!" Lord Annihilation said with a laugh.

"Congratulations, congratulations." Azurefiend chortled as well.

Hegemon Tia smiled as she looked at them, but a hint of sorrow flickered in her eyes. The Paragon's brothers were about to come back to life, but her beloved, the one who she viewed as more important than life itself? It was completely impossible for that person to be brought back to life. Grief had killed her heart long ago, and the only reason she hadn't killed herself was because she had promised to keep living. Ever since that day, however, she had no longer truly cared about life, and thus she had dived into one dangerous location after another, earning the nickname of 'Mad Hegemon Tia' in the rest of the Chaosverse.

"I'm feeling a bit excited." The tears quickly dried on the Paragon of Pills' face, and she smiled brightly. "I was so worried. I feel much better now that I know Autarch Skyfeeder has agreed."

"Haha, Mistress, once we manage to leave this secret dimension, Autarch Skyfeeder will go with you to the otherverse and reverse spacetime to revive your three brothers," Ning said.

"Once we leave?" The Paragon suddenly frowned. "Darknorth, didn't you say this place is incredibly dangerous? Not even the Autarchs will be able to enter here."

Ning nodded. "Don't worry. I'll do everything in my power to get you out of here, Mistress."

"No, that's not what I meant. I trust you. But, it's not guaranteed that



we'll be able to escape this place," the Paragon said. "If I die here, my avatar will die immediately as well. I'll never be able to see the three of them again. Even though I know Autarch Skyfeeder will still reverse spacetime to revive the three of them, if I'm not able to see it in person... I really can't accept this."

"I understand." Ning nodded. "Then what are you suggesting, Mistress?"

"My avatar is alongside Tia and Annihilation's avatars. I can give you the location. I'd like to ask Autarch Skyfeeder to go find my avatar, then take it with her when she revives my three brothers. Is that acceptable?" the Paragon asked.

"Might as well." Ning didn't refuse, because he himself wasn't completely confident that they'd be able to escape this place. He had been forced to use his own sword-arts multiple times in the Daoguard Tower area, and they were now in a place that was so mysterious the Autarchs couldn't even locate it. This was definitely a far more dangerous place than the first Daoguard Tower.

Ning immediately sent a message to Autarch Skyfeeder, asking for her help. She agreed, her true body exiting the Quintessence. However, the Chaosverse was so very large that it would take a bit of time for her to go find the Paragon of Pills.

"Let's scout the surrounding area for now, but make sure to be careful. Let's not take any risks just yet. We'll save that for after your three brothers are revived," Ning said with a laugh. The Paragon of Pills, Hegemon Tia, and the others all acknowledged.

Whoosh. Ning flew into the skies by himself, quickly reaching an altitude of over a hundred million kilometers.

"Eh?" The skies above him were like an enormous azure bowl. Ning frowned when he stared into them, and he released his Sword Dao Domain to apply some pressure to the heavens. Alas, the heavens were incomparably resilient, and they actually pushed back and down against Ning.

"It really is quite stable. It seems there is no chance at all that I might be

able to tear through this place through raw force.” Ning quickly came to this determination. As soon as he had arrived here, he had suspected that this might be the case. This was because even the ‘Dimensional Hallway Chains’ formed by a single Daoguard Tower had been incredibly stable. This place was clearly much more dangerous; there was no way he would be able to break through this place with ease. Indeed, his test confirmed his suspicions.

Whoosh. Ning flew back down, descending to rejoin Azurefiend, the Paragon of Pills, Hegemon Tia, and the others.

“What should we do, Daolord?” Lord Annihilation asked.

“There’s no way to break through via brute force,” Ning said with a chuckle. “We’ll need to find some weaknesses in this dimension and then break through via them. For such a large dimension to be so stable means that it has to have an internal energy source of some kind or a formation keeping it together. We’ll be able to escape by destroying either of them.

“I can vaguely sense some living creatures off in the distance.” Ning pointed towards the horizon ahead of them. “Very weak creatures. Let’s go take a look.”

“Very weak?” Azurefiend was startled. “How could a terrifying place like this have weak creatures within it?”

“But they really do seem to be extremely weak. I could probably wipe them out by breathing on them,” Ning said.

Since he had already promised that they wouldn’t do anything dangerous before reviving the Paragon of Pills’ brothers, Ning was going to play it safe for now. Given his current level of insight into the Dao, he was able to sense and avoid danger while seeking out good fortune! However, the central controls or other critical points in a hidden realm like this would generally be extremely dangerous, and so there was no way to ‘avoid danger’ here.

Sometimes, you knew the road ahead of you was dangerous but you still had to take it, because only then would you have a chance at survival!

Whoosh. The group quickly flew into the air. Below them was a vast sea of water that seemed to be truly boundless and without end.

“Right here!” Ning quickly came to a halt and stared downwards. Beneath him was an ‘island’ that was tens of millions of kilometers in size. Actually, in most places it would have been described as a ‘continent’, but this dimension and the sea it held was so incredibly vast that this island was nothing more than a tiny little speck. It wouldn’t be wrong for major powers like Ning to refer to it as an ‘island’.

This island had countless living beings thriving within it. Ning stared downwards, his gaze quickly locking onto the most powerful being in this entire island.

Within a wilderness region, three humanoids were battling against a vilefiend who was dressed in long black robes. He was fairly handsome and exuded an aura of charisma, but in battle he was indescribably ferocious and savage.

“You humans have killed me many times, but you’ll never be able to kill me permanently. I’ll come back to life time and time again! Ahaha! I can fail any number of times, but you cannot fail even once... because if you do, I’ll butcher every living person on this entire continent. Ahahaha! Want to know a little secret? I’ve actually already done it on five different occasions in history!” The vilefiend’s voice was sharp and shrill. “This will be my sixth time. If you want to survive, you should bow down to me. I need a few lackies, after all. I don’t like you, but you are fairly strong.”

“Forget about it! This continent belongs to us Sithe! We would never allow a vilefiend like yourself to run rampant here!” The leader of the three was a six-armed man who was furiously attacking with six giant warhammers. Alas, the vilefiend was far too fast and nimble; if it wasn’t for the other two party members, the leader would’ve been defeated long ago.

The second member of the party was a red-haired man who wielded a warblade and whose entire body was bathed in flames. He howled furiously, “The valiant men of the Sithe shall never succumb to a vilefiend

like yourself!”

The final member of the party was a gray-robed woman, and she had an icy look on her face as she controlled her magic treasures to attack from afar. She said in a frozen voice, “We Sithe would rather all die in battle than submit to a vilefiend like yourself.”

Ning, the Paragon of Pills, Azurefiend, and the rest all watched from high up in the skies, rather shocked by all of this.

“The ‘valiant men of the Sithe’?” Ning blinked. “Why does that phrase feel so... odd?”

“The ‘Sithe would rather all die in battle than submit to a vilefiend’?” Azurefiend mumbled to himself, “That’s a pretty determined statement! I had no idea the Sithe were so intrepid.”

The three humanoids below them were merely of the Elder God/Ancestral Immortal level, while the vilefiend was an extremely weak member of the vilefiend race. There was an enormous degree of difference between it and the vilefiends Ning encountered near the Daoguard Tower.

This was nothing more than a battle at the Elder God level. To the likes of Ning, the Paragon of Pills, Azurefiend, Lord Annihilation, Hegemon Flameleft, or Hegemon Tia, these four were all very puny! And yet, they were the most powerful beings on this island. Ning was telling the truth earlier when he said that they were ‘very weak’.

“Haha!” Lord Annihilation laughed as well. “To us cultivators as a whole, the Sithe are a calamity, a nightmare, a blight on existence! The Sithe, however, also have weak members of the race who are akin to our mortals. Perhaps they find pride in being Sithe.”

“They call themselves Sithe, but they aren’t actually true Sithe,” Ning said.

“They aren’t true Sithe?” Everyone present stared at Ning, puzzled.

“Master, how is it that you know this?” Azurefiend asked.

Ning didn’t explain any further, because this involved many hidden

secrets that would only cause Azurefiend and the others to feel unnecessary consternation.

If they were true Sithe, they would be rejected by all the prime essences of the Chaosverse, making it impossible for them to use the power of the Dao! However, all three of the humans below them were infusing the Dao into each and every strike. They weren't rejected by the prime essences!

# Chapter 15: Filthy

“Did you hear that? That little vilefiend just said he’s wiped out all life on this island several times,” Azurefiend said.

“Unsurprising,” Ji Ning replied. “This hidden dimension is within the Sithelands, which means that vilefiends can arise here! Although they are fairly weak without the power of a Daoguard Tower behind them, they are still enough to be absolute catastrophes for islands like this. In addition, vilefiends have essence springs located in other places. I can kill them with my sword and then locate and destroy their essence springs via karma, but the living beings on this island can only use all their strength to fight and kill the vilefiend time and time again without being able to truly exterminate it. Given enough time, the vilefiend will rise to power once more and then cause yet another calamity to descend upon this island.”

The Paragon of Pills sighed. “Vilefiends are nothing to us, but they represent apocalypse to the countless beings on this island.”

Hegemon Tia said, “Perhaps this is a method the Sithe use to train and temper the members of their race.”

“...Yes, that’s extremely possible.” Ning’s eyes lit up. Applying pressure via vilefiends could result in more powerful experts arising more frequently.

As they spoke, Ning and the others descended onto the island.

“Attack!”

“Let’s launch an all-out assault!” The three humans were beginning to unleash their desperation attacks.

“Hahaha... desperation attacks? I’ll give you one final blow and annihilate any hope that you might still harbor. I’m looking forward to those looks of despair on your face, the despair that stems from the very depths of your soul... I can’t help but feel excited when I see those looks!” The vilefiend was actually shaking from anticipation.

Suddenly... slash! A streak of sword-light sliced through the vilefiend.

The vilefiend's face still had that look of twisted joy on it, but a heartbeat later it completely disintegrated into dust. Ning's sword followed the karma lines attaching it to its essence spring, destroying that as well. From this day forth, the vilefiend which had troubled this island and its many living beings for countless generations was no more.

"Helping you kill that vilefiend is a form of recompense for rifling through your memories." Ning began to search through the memories of those three 'Sithe' humans. The fact that their attacks were infused with the power of the Dao meant that they were also natives of this Chaosverse, and so Ning treated them as humans rather than as Sithe. This was why he wished to 'repay' them for what he was doing.

"Master, now that you've killed that vilefiend, this island won't suffer any more attacks. Doesn't that mean that the tempering trial the Sithe set up is over?" Azurefiend asked.

"I don't give a shit," Ning said casually.

Azurefiend blinked. The Paragon of Pills, Hegemon Tia, Hegemon Flameleft, and Lord Annihilation all stared at Ning in shock. 'I don't give a shit'... how could words like this have come from the mouth of the peerlessly dazzling 'Daolord Darknorth'?

There were many Emperors and Hegemons with foul dispositions and even fouler language. However, to the people present, Darknorth was a person of incomparably exalted stature, someone who was very nearly a peer of the Autarchs. They couldn't help but feel a bit uncomfortable when they heard Ning say this.

In truth, Ning had a completely perfect Dao-heart. He'd say whatever he felt without needing to disguise it.

"Um. So what have you discovered?" the Paragon of Pills asked.

"They are just Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. They know very little... but their memories do contain information regarding a legendary and 'invincible' figure who controls all sixty-three islands in this vast

territory. That person is known to them as Archfiend Huabo, and he is so ‘unfathomably powerful’ that he has never been defeated and can wipe out an entire island with a wave of his hand.” Ning snickered. “Their memories indicate that Archfiend Huabo should know more about this place than them.”

Ning and the others left, and as they did the three humans regained consciousness.

“What just happened?”

“What’s going on?”

“Where’s the vilefiend?” All three of them were completely puzzled. When Ning had rifled through their memories, it hadn’t had a negative impact on them at all. It was like a brief moment of unconsciousness.

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Archfiend Huabo was the ruler of sixty-three islands, and in truth he was a Daolord of the Fourth Step. In this era and amongst these weak cultivators, he truly was ‘invincible’! But to Ning and his team? A Daolord of the Fourth Step was still extremely weak, so weak that he could be exterminated with just a breath!

Archfiend Huabo was seated on his royal throne. Below him was a large number of beautiful women who were dancing for him, while at each side of the hall there were many chained beings who were being tortured and tormented.

He had an extremely strange personality and temperament. He was the undisputed hegemon of these sixty-three islands, and countless living beings had been tortured to death by him. He delighted in torture, in hearing their final screams and cries. This was what made him smile, and was the reason why he was known as the ‘Archfiend’.

A smile on his face, he watched the beautiful women dance while listening to the viperous curses and blubbering wails of his prisoners.

“Those fools. All of them ran off to the Sacred Realm, and for what? The Sacred Realm has many powerful experts there; we’d be nothing more



than the crust on their boots,” Archfiend Huabo mused. “Staying behind is a much better decision. I’m virtually invincible here and can do whatever I want. Isn’t that wonderful? As for the Daomerge... hmph! Did they really think they would succeed in the Daomerge just because major powers in the Sacred Realm will provide them guidance? I hear that their success rates remain pitifully low.”

“Staying behind is definitely the better choice, ehehe... tomorrow, I’ll go capture a few more people. The ones in the prison have almost all died out by now.” Archfiend Huabo was in a superb mood. As for the beautiful dancers, all of them were quivering in fear, even if none of them dared to reveal it. They did their best to please the almighty Archfiend, for fear of being tortured to death as well.

Suddenly, a total of six people walked into the hall. The dance came to a halt, and the smile on Archfiend Huabo’s face suddenly froze. Even the steam coming from the cup of mulled wine by his side froze in midair. Time itself seemed to stop.

The six figures walking in were Ji Ning, the Paragon of Pills, Azurefiend, Hegemon Tia, Hegemon Flameleft, and Lord Annihilation.

Ning’s Sword Dao Domain had sealed down spacetime itself, causing time to freeze completely. The dancers and the Archfiend would have no recollection at all of what happened in this moment.

“Let’s take a look at their memories.” Ning was able to easily rifle through this Daolord’s memories. He finished after a few moments, then fell completely silent.

“How does it look?” The others all looked at Ning.

“This is going to be troublesome,” Ning said, then chuckled. “But we knew that from the beginning. Simply put, this Daolord’s memories indicate that this hidden dimension has a total of six ‘realms’ where mortals live, as well as an exalted ‘Sacred Realm’ and an evil, desolate ‘Purgatory’.”

“Together, the six mortal worlds, the Sacred Realm, and Purgatory form this entire hidden dimension,” Ning said. “At least, that’s what he believes

and his memories indicate.”

“The six mortal realms are all extremely vast and are filled with countless mortals and many cultivators. However, only cultivators who become Samsara Daolords are qualified to enter the Sacred Realm! Of course, there are many Samsara Daolords who choose to stay behind in the six mortal realms instead, but if they DO succeed in the Daomerge and become Eternal Emperors, they are required to enter the Sacred Realm,” Ning said. “If they do not, then major powers shall descend from the Sacred Realm to capture and then punish them.”

The Paragon of Pills frowned: “It seems as though the ‘Sacred Realm’ is where all the major powers of this hidden dimension are gathered. What of this ‘Purgatory’, then?”

“The Purgatory is the place where extremely evil people and people who are being punished by the major powers shall be exiled to! That place is both dangerous and desolate,” Ning said. “My guess is that the most important parts of this dimension reside within the ‘Sacred Realm’!”

The most powerful people present in the six mortal realms were Daolords of the Fourth Step. The Sacred Realm was where the true major powers had gathered, which meant that there was a 99% chance that the core control mechanisms of this hidden dimension were located there as well.

“Are the countless living beings of this dimension truly Sithe progeny? And what is the history of this place?” Hegemon Flameleft asked.

“That’s not information a Daolord of the Fourth Step like him would know,” Ning said with a chuckle. “What we need to do is to head into the Sacred Realm!”

The Sacred Realm... it was undoubtedly filled with many major powers and terrifying Sithe traps. Ning wouldn’t be surprised if it had ten Daoguard Towers within it! Once they headed off to the Sacred Realm, a war would probably break out.

“How can we get there?” Azurefiend asked.

“Through the ‘Realmgate’,” Ning said. “However, now is not yet the time. Let’s wait for the Mistress’ three brothers to be revived before we head off to the Realmgate and enter the Sacred Realm.”

The Paragon of Pills smiled.

“Let’s go.” Ning glanced at Archfiend Huabo, who was still seated on his throne with a frozen grin on his face, then waved a finger. A streak of sword-light shot out, passing through the Archfiend’s skull and destroying his soul and truesoul. From this day forth, Archfiend Huabo, who had been the hegemon of these sixty-three islands for countless years, died as a result of people who literally came out of nowhere. Even as he died, he had no idea what was happening or who was killing him.

“M-master... you already looked through his memories. Why’d you kill him?” Azurefiend stared.

“It was precisely because I looked through his memories that I killed him.” Ning shook his head and muttered, “Absolutely filthy. I really couldn’t help myself.”

Ning’s group quietly slipped away, leaving behind a palace in a state of chaos.

# Chapter 16: Spacetime Reversal

## Resurrection

Roughly five months after Ji Ning's group had first been sent into this hidden dimension, Autarch Skyfeeder brought the avatars of the Paragon of Pills and Lord Annihilation to the otherverse they resided in. It was time to begin the process of reversing spacetime and reviving those three Emperors.

Lord Annihilation's otherverse. The Archaeus Region. The Prime Reaches of the Genesis Lands.

This was a place filled with corpses, all of whom had failed in the struggle over the control of this otherverse.

The gentle-eyed and slightly plump Autarch Skyfeeder glanced at the various Emperor-class corpses within the Prime Reaches as the avatars of the Paragon and Lord Annihilation stood respectfully to one side.

"Looks like this was quite a bitter battle," Autarch Skyfeeder said. "This is an otherverse which I created extremely, extremely early on. I didn't put it within the Eight Domains, which is why only a few Hegemons took part in this struggle."

The Blazesun Domain and the rest of the Eight Domains had so many experts present that the members of most squads were usually at the Hegemonic level. Every so often, you would also see an Otherverse Lord or someone in control of a powerful Sithe weapon. Thus, when two competing teams found an otherverse to fight over, the battle would involve ten or so Hegemons!

However, the Prime Reaches here only held three Hegemonic corpses, as well as quite a few ordinary Eternal Emperors. It was indeed a bitter battle, but the power of the combatants involved was somewhat lower than what would be seen in the Eight Domains.

"Otherverses are incredibly rare outside the Eight Domains," the avatar of the Paragon of Pills said softly. "The appearance of this otherverse

caused everyone to go wild. The four Hegemons who were the first to arrived each brought subordinates and were willing to risk everything for the sake of this otherverse. A great battle broke out, and in the end Hegemon Dustfall was the one who won. My three brothers covered me, letting me escape, but the ones who were left behind were all suppressed and bound by the power of this otherverse, which now had a master. Nothing awaited them save death, and they knew it. Hegemon Dustfall was kind enough to allow each of the Emperors a chance to leave behind a legacy, and he also let their corpses remain intact.”

An Otherverse Lord who was inside of his otherverse would be dramatically more powerful than when he was outside in the ‘normal’ world. The otherverse was his territory, and the overwhelming power of the otherverse ensured that he himself would also be incredibly strong! This was why the Lonely King instantly became famous after chasing someone into an otherverse, then destroying it.

As for Hegemons? When directly suppressed by the power of an otherverse, they wouldn’t even be able to move a finger!

“However, shortly after Dustfall acquired this otherverse, he died while adventuring in a dangerous place. You ended up lucking out, Annihilation.” The Paragon of Pills glanced at Lord Annihilation.

“It was just a matter of speed, but I admit that my luck wasn’t bad.” Lord Annihilation smiled.

“I’m going to begin now,” Autarch Skyfeeder said. “Just stand there and watch.”

“Understood.” The avatars of Lord Annihilation and the Paragon of Pills both nodded respectfully, with a look of excitement appearing in the eyes of the latter.

Rumble...

Autarch Skyfeeder stared towards the Sword Hegemon, still leaning against his enormous dark-blue greatsword. Behind him was the white-robed man who had three swords on his back as well as the azure-armored man who had planted nine blood-colored swords into the ground

before him. Time quickly began to slow, stop, and then reverse in the area around them.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Countless images went past, including the images of Ning's arrival within this region. Just a short while later, it had reversed all the way to the earliest and most ancient days of this otherverse. This was when the three had fallen in battle.

"My beloved friends all died in this battle. There is no way I will pardon you or release you." In the temporally inverted images before them, they were able to see a valiant old man dressed in silvery-white armor who stood high up on a mountain. "However... I don't blame you for doing what you did. All of us were trying to take this otherverse. I simply was the one to win. I'll give you all some time to make your final preparations; make sure you don't waste this time. I'll also set down barriers to ensure that your corpses will not be disturbed in the many eons to come."

None of the Hegemons or Emperors tried to argue with him. This truly had been a bitter battle with many deaths; it was already quite magnanimous that the victor was giving them time to pass down legacies for themselves.

"Big brother... second brother... we were so close! I still can't believe this," said the azure-armored man who had planted those nine blood-colored swords in the earth before him.

"It doesn't matter how close we were. We lost. At least we three brothers will be able to die together." The white-robed man had a smile on his face. Clearly, he had already accepted his fate.

"This was all my fault." The muscular greatsword-bearing Hegemon let out a sigh, but his eyes were quite peaceful as well.

When the Paragon of Pills saw and heard this, her eyes turned moist. She tightly clenched her hands together, continuing to watch.

"Freeze!" Autarch Skyfeeder stared at the image before them, causing time to freeze before her. In this frozen moment, the three of them were still alive.

“Spacetime, reverse. Truesouls, return!” Autarch Skyfeeder turned quite solemn as well. The truesoul fragments of this Hegemon, along with the truesoul fragments of the other two Emperors behind him, had all been swallowed by the prime essences of this otherverse and hidden at its very core. They had become one with the otherverse itself! What she was doing right now was akin to tearing out part of a stone tower’s foundation; if not done correctly, it was quite possible that the tower itself would crumble.

It was easy to swallow something and digest it, but very hard to drag it back out. Not even Lord Annihilation, the master of this otherverse, would be able to accomplish it.

Thankfully, Autarch Skyfeeder had been the person who created this otherverse. Even if she did wreck it, she would be able to repair it. Right now, all she needed to do was to keep it stable.

“Gather!” Autarch Skyfeeder barked out a second time. This time, countless truesoul fragments began to fly out from the deepest part of the Prime Reaches, then levitate into the air. The Prime Reaches was the location where the prime essences of this Otherverse were located.

Visually, the truesoul fragments looked like tiny little motes of light. These countless little motes of light all flew towards the three standing Emperors. As more light appeared and as spacetime continued to advance, the bodies of the three formerly-illusory figures quickly began to solidify.

Rumble... the earth throughout the Prime Reaches began to shudder. In fact, the entire massive otherverse began to tremble slightly. Lord Annihilation turned pale as he continued to watch nervously. This was his otherverse; if it collapsed, he would be doomed. But all he could do was look at Autarch Skyfeeder, not daring to make a sound.

Autarch Skyfeeder herself remained quite calm.

Big brother! The Paragon of Pills watched this all excitedly.

The three figures grew increasingly solid as more and more light poured into them, and their auras became increasingly real as well. A hint of light appeared within their eyes, a light which represented life and sentience.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Finally, all three auras completely stabilized, and a look of shock appeared in the eyes of the Hegemon and his two brothers. Alive! They were alive again!

“Big brother. Second brother. Third brother.” Overwhelmed with excitement, the Paragon of Pills charged straight towards them.

Autarch Skyfeeder had made use of their three undamaged corpses to bring them fully back to life. If their bodies were gone, she still would've been able to revive them, but it would've taken more effort; recreating a Hegemonic body was no easy feat, after all.

“Little sister.” The greatsword-bearing man looked at the Paragon of Pills, then at his two nearby brothers. “Second brother. Third brother.”

The Paragon of Pills wrapped her arms tightly around the muscular man. She had endured many, many things after her three brothers had died.

“Little sister.” The muscular man hugged the Paragon of Pills back, a complex look on his face. They weren't true siblings, they just referred to each other that way as a term of endearment. In truth, they were lovers.

“Haha, we've come back to life! Hahaha, we've all come back to life!” The azure-armored man was the most excited of the three.

“Big brother. Third brother. Little sister,” the white-robed man sent mentally to them, his gaze focused on the distant Autarch Skyfeeder, “It was the Autarch who brought us back to life, right?”

He was the calmest of the three who had just been brought back to life. The Paragon of Pills quickly came back to her senses. She hurriedly turned and bowed gratefully towards Autarch Skyfeeder, “Thank you, Autarch, for saving my three brothers.”

“Thank you, Autarch, for saving our lives,” the Hegemon and his two Emperors said.

“Impressive. You were actually able to convince an Autarch to come rescue the three of us... and it looks as though you yourself have become a Hegemon, little sister,” the azure-armored man sent mentally.



Autarch Skyfeeder said with a calm smile on her face, “I came at Darknorth’s request. Of course I took it seriously! Alright, now that this matter is finished, it is time for me to go.”

“Safe travels, Autarch.” Lord Annihilation let out a sigh of relief. Autarchs truly were impressive; his otherverse had been barely affected by this process.

“Safe travels, Autarch.” The Paragon of Pills and the others all bowed respectfully once more. Autarch Skyfeeder took a single step, then disappeared into the void.

“Haha, congratulations, my friends!” Lord Annihilation smiled as he bowed towards the three brothers. “I imagine there are many things the Paragon of Pills wishes to talk to you about. I won’t bother you any further. When you are free, you must come and be my guests at the Church of Annihilation.” Lord Annihilation’s avatar then took a step away, disappearing into the void as well.

“Little sister, you truly are incredible.” The azure-armored man was still extremely excited.

As for the muscular man, he continued to hold the Paragon of Pills’ hand in an affectionate display of love.

“Little sister, the Autarch said that she came on the request of ‘Darknorth’? Who is this ‘Darknorth’? He must be a major power. Is he an Autarch as well?” the white-robed man asked.

“Right. Based on what I know, it is almost impossible to convince an Autarch to help revive a Hegemon.” The muscular man couldn’t help but ask as well: “Who exactly is this ‘Darknorth’ fellow? He was able to have an Autarch carry out tasks for him... and apparently, didn’t even come in person?”

# Chapter 17: Assaulting the Realmgate

If you were going to ask someone to help you out with something, you would at least show up yourself, right? This was doubly true when you were asking an Autarch to help out. How much face were the Autarchs giving this 'Darknorth' fellow, for them to show up even when he himself did not?

"Haha." The Paragon of Pills laughed. "Darknorth is a Daolord, a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge... but he is extremely close to the Autarchs in actual power."

"What?!" The three were astonished and unable to believe this. A Daolord who had failed the Daomerge? They felt no regard at all for people like that... but one who was close to the Autarchs in power? They couldn't even imagine how this was possible.

"Hegemons are nothing more than ants to him. He doesn't even need to strike them in order to kill them! Only someone like the Lonely King of the Icepeak Army is worthy of him attacking, but he only needed to strike a single time to slay the Lonely King," the Paragon of Pills said. "He is on extremely good terms with the Autarchs, and he was the one who convinced Autarch Skyfeeder to come here."

Her three 'brothers' were truly flabbergasted by this. This Darknorth was truly an incredible figure!

"In fact... big brother," the Paragon of Pills said with a chortle, "He's actually one of your honorary disciples."

"What? Mine?" The muscular man stared at her, his eyes popping wide. "My honorary disciple?"

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The hidden dimension.

Ever since Ji Ning and the others had discovered that this dimension was divided up into six mortal realms, a 'Sacred Realm', and a 'Purgatory', they had begun to relax and wander through the mortal realms. The plan was

to wait until the Paragon of Pills' three brothers were revived before risking entry into the Realmgate.

“Congratulations, Paragon of Pills.”

“Congratulations, Mistress.” Ji Ning, Azurefiend, Tia, Flameleft, and Annihilation all offered their congratulations. They even prepared congratulatory gifts.

All of them could clearly sense how the Paragon of Pills' aura had changed. In the past, she had seemed so solitary, cold, and remote. Now, it was like winter had left and spring had come. She had an uncontrollable smile on her face, and her joy was absolutely infectious.

“Now that I've met them again, I truly have no regrets left.” The Paragon looked at Ning. “Darknorth, I have to thank you for everything.”

“If it wasn't for the insights I gained in the Archaeus Region and the help you provided, Mistress, I might not necessarily have been able to embark upon the path of the Omega Dao,” Ning said. “I wouldn't have reached my current level of power either.”

If he was allowed to choose again between success in the Daomerge and becoming a Hegemon (via fused Supreme Daos) or failure in the Daomerge but mastering the Eternal Omega Dao, he would probably still choose the latter.

Why? Because... if even the Autarchs were unable to revive Yu Wei, the Omega Dao was the only chance he had! Even though he failed, he would still be an incandescently dazzling figure for over ten thousand chaos cycles. As far as Ning was concerned, this was superior to an eternity of mediocrity.

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The Paragon of Pills had no further regrets in life. Now, she was able to face all dangers with complete calmness and equanimity, meeting even death with a smile on her face. Ning, however, was even more determined to ensure the Paragon's safety! She had just reunited with her beloved brothers; if she was to die here, wouldn't that be a truly painful farewell?

Once Hegemons died, it would be virtually impossible to bring them back to life. Her big brother had only been revived because he had died within an otherverse. If the Paragon of Pills died here, there would be no way she could be brought back.

Whoosh! They soared through the air and quickly reached the location of the Realmgate.

“This here is the Realmgate.” They had spent several months scanning through the memories of many different Daolords. As a result, they were able to recognize it right away.

“Master, we were teleported directly into this dimension. I imagine the true ruler of this dimension was made aware of our appearance long ago,” Azurefiend said. “Prior to this, we were in the mortal realm. There’s nothing in the mortal realm which can pose a threat to us, and so the controller of this dimension was unable to touch us from afar, nor would he dare to actually attack you directly. But once we go through the Realmgate and reach the Sacred Realm, things will be different. We’ll be surrounded by danger.”

“Agreed.” Ning nodded. He had long ago prepared for the likelihood that the master of this place was aware of his presence.

“Travelling to the Sacred Realm is our only hope,” the Paragon of Pills said. “Darknorth, you are so very strong that the Sithe experts hiding in this place would never dare to challenge you to a fair fight. That’s why they haven’t attacked yet! Our records indicate that when Daolords dare to disobey orders from the Sacred Realm, powerful experts will descend to seize and punish them. This means it is possible for Sithe experts to descend upon this place... but they have not! Why? Because they fear you, Darknorth. But you failed your Daomerge, which means that you will eventually die from your truesoul crumbling away. Once that happens, the Sithe will probably attack and kill the rest of us.”

“I’m not willing to spend the rest of my life in these mortal realms either,” Ning said with a chuckle. In a fair fight, not even Sithe Exalts were a match for him. Even if four or five Exalts attacked him, given his speed

and agility, if he focused on dodging then they wouldn't even be able to touch his clothes. The difference in ability between them was enormous!

But if their opponents were aided by Daoguard Towers? That would make this extremely difficult.

"Let's advance via realmship," Ning said as he produced his realmship. All six of them entered the realmship. They did this not because they needed it to travel, but because they wanted to benefit from the extra layer of protection it provided. Realmships were extremely sturdy, after all; breaching them was no easy task.

The Realmgate was a hundred thousand kilometers high and utterly massive. It emanated dazzling light and was shaped like a giant door, and around it space was twisted and distorted into multiple folds.

Swoosh. Ning and the others flew forwards via realmship, protected and surrounded by Ning's Sword Dao Domain. As they moved closer to the gate, they could sense that the twisted dimensional folds were impeding their advance. To Ning, however, they were like nothing more than a spring breeze, incapable of barring his path in the slightest.

"We're heading in. Be careful, everyone." Ning could sense his subconscious warning him of danger, but there was nothing he could do. This was their only chance to escape and survive this place. Delay and buy time? There was no way he could out-delay the Sithe.

The realmship finally flew into the iridescent Realmgate. It quickly made its way completely inside the gate, only to see an extremely stable tunnel which was formed through many layers of folded dimensional space.

Whoosh. The realmship flew through this stable dimensional tunnel at high speeds. Given Ning's current level of power, he was able to see past all obstacles and make out the awesome aura of the world off in the distance... the 'Sacred Realm'. The aura of the Sacred Realm was noticeably vaster and more powerful, and it held far more experts as well.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Suddenly, the formerly-stable tunnel began to shatter apart as two strange triangular weapons appeared in the sides of the dimensional folds off in the distance. Two more appeared within the

sides of the dimensional tunnel behind Ning as well. It was their appearance which caused the dimensional tunnel to begin to crack.

“Not good.” Ning’s face tightened. He didn’t hesitate at all, immediately expanding his Sword Dao Domain dramatically in size, causing a large amount of sword-light to appear and furiously assault the four triangular weapons.

The four triangular weapons all had sharp edges which shot out rays of light. These rays of light were extremely thin and allowed them to easily tear through space. There was no way Ning’s Sword Dao Domain could resist the four streaks of light; each streak of light represented an enormous amount of energy and power, and all four of them shot out to Ning’s realmship.

“What a terrifying weapon.” Ning immediately willed the realmship to move in an erratic pattern as it flowed through the crumbling and chaotic tunnel, moving from one position to another. The realmship itself was like a sword which was being used to display a truly marvelous sword-art.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! All four rays of light shot past the realmship, not able to touch it at all. “Thank goodness I mastered the Space Sword Dao.” Ning let out a sigh of relief.

They were within a dimensional tunnel; as the tunnel crumbled, space here became increasingly chaotic. Those four triangular weapons had just launched attacks with extremely thin dimensional blades, and by all rights it should’ve been nearly impossible for someone to dodge them unharmed in such a chaotic environment. Ning, however, had achieved just that thanks to his Space Sword Dao.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Those four triangular weapons suddenly expanded dramatically in size as they charged towards Ning’s realmship. Ning could sense the enormous threat they posed. As for Azurefiend, the Paragon of Pills, and the others within the realmship, they could do nothing save watch. They wouldn’t even be able to react in time against attacks of this level!

“Get in here.” Ning instantly emerged from the realmship, then drew it

back into his estate-world. There was no way he could simply rely on the realmship to deal with those triangular weapons.

Snick. Ning drew a Northbow sword from the sheath on his back. “Hm. I can’t let them get close to me. They seem to possess the ability to self-detonate.” At Ning’s current level, he was able to vaguely see what some future possibilities would be. Thus, Ning suddenly tossed his sword out.

Whooosh! Ning tossed the sword out like a whip, sending a gentle stream of sword-light sweeping out like a beautiful creek. The water glowed in a dazzling manner as it lashed through the air, gently rapping against the surface of one of the triangular weapons. That triangular weapon couldn’t help but be nudged off-course to one side, clashing against one of the other triangular weapons.

“No more playing around.” Ning glanced at the nearly-collapsed dimensional tunnel around him. Ahead of them was the end of the tunnel and the Sacred Realm. He immediately used his sword-arts to forcibly charge through all opposition and make it outside.

# Chapter 18: Dimensional Seams

“Seal!” A cold voice suddenly rang out from the Sacred Realm in front of them. A streak of light shot out from the Sacred Realm, forming a membrane in front of it that denied entry. A moment later, the four triangular weapons surrounding Ji Ning suddenly unleashed a blast of utterly terrifying power.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The four triangular weapons released all of the power held within them in a final explosion, blasting apart and sending shrapnel in every direction and creating a zone of death around them! There was no way one could avoid this zone attack, as the entire area was filled with explosive waves of power. Even the Blazesun Ruler would’ve been reduced to dust if enveloped by such powerful explosions.

“They actually detonated such incredibly valuable treasures?” Ning held a single Northbow sword at the ready. Swoosh! He suddenly sent out a swirl of sword-light that chopped through the space surrounding him like tofu, causing it to ripple and form into a dimensional barrier which surrounded and protected him.

“Time to go.” Ning wasn’t going to just stand there like a fool. Swish! Using his Dao of Space, Ning transformed himself into a dimensional shard that fled off into the distance! When any of the explosive power struck him, the dimensional barrier surrounding Ning would simply deflect it with a slight ripple. This level of power might be able to easily breach the defenses of a Sithe Exalt or the Blazesun Ruler, but the defensive power of Ning’s Space Sword Dao was far too great.

However... given enough time, the power would still be depleted and exhausted.

Rumble... the dimensional tunnel had been completely disintegrated, while the four terrifying triangular weapons had exploded apart into countless little shards. Ning rapidly flew away from this region, ensuring that the detonations were unable to harm him in the slightest.



A short while later, Ning came to a halt. Northbow sword in hand and Sword Dao Domain surrounding him, Ning scanned the nearby area.

“So this is the seam between the eight realms, eh?” Ning mused to himself. Now that the dimensional tunnel had been destroyed, Ning was trapped within the seam between the realms. Space was incredibly chaotic and twisted here, but given Ning’s level of mastery he wasn’t impeded by it at all.

Whoosh. Ning used his Sword Dao Domain to separate the surrounding dangers from himself, then quickly advanced towards the front. A short while later, he saw an enormous membrane. Behind it, he could vaguely make out a vast world filled with incredible amounts of power.

“The Sacred Realm.” Ning immediately knew that the world beyond the membrane had to be the ‘Sacred Realm’, but the dimensional membrane was incredibly tough; Ning didn’t even need to test it with his Sword Dao Domain to know that there was no chance of using it to punch through.

“Even the membranes surrounding the six mortal realms of this hidden dimension were incredibly tough and durable. If I couldn’t break through them, I have no chance at all at this one around the Sacred Realm,” Ning mused. “The six mortal realms, the Sacred Realm, and Purgatory have all been completely sealed off. Does that mean I’ve been trapped here permanently?”

“No, that can’t be right. The Sithe wouldn’t do such a thing.” Ning quickly came to this realization. If the Sithe had merely wanted to trap him, they could’ve simply sealed off the Realmgate and kept Ning permanently trapped within the ordinary realm he was in.

“Let’s go check out the other places.” Ning flew through the vast realm-seam, moving towards some of the other realms.

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The Sacred Realm.

This was the supreme world which was used to control this hidden dimension. Many powerful Sithe were located here, and at the center of

this world was a trio of towering mountains. Each mountain had a pagoda at the peak, and each pagoda was exactly twelve stories tall! They all emanated auras of dazzling light that caused spacetime to ripple and twist within the area of their illumination.

These were the three Elder Palaces which the most mysterious and most exalted denizens of the Sacred Realm dwelt. However, the auras of two Elder Palaces were rather dim and weak; only one of them continued to radiate an aura of incandescent splendor.

Within the brightest Elder Palace. A large group of experts were standing within it, staring through the palace gates to the world outside. At their head stood a youth dressed in deep blue robes. His hair was deep blue while his face was grim and cold. He held his hands behind his back, standing ramrod-straight and emanating an awesome aura.

“We failed.” The blue-haired youth frowned. “It really is hard to get rid of someone in control of an Eternal Omega Dao.”

“Exalt.” Some of the Hegemons and Emperors standing behind him had undergone the Ritual Sacrificium, and one of the Hegemons spoke out: “Exalt, where did this white-robed Daolord come from? We detonated four Calamity-class weapons but still were unable to do anything to him.”

“Enough.” The blue-haired youth waved his hand, then turned to stare at the Hegemons and Emperors behind him. He said in a calm voice, “We failed our first attempt, which means it is now up to Purgatory to act! If Purgatory succeeds, this matter shall be at an end. If Purgatory fails, we’ll have no choice but to draw him into the Sacred Realm and resolve this through battle!”

“Master, why? He’s a Daolord who failed the Daomerge. His true soul is crumbling away! So long as we keep him completely sealed within these eight realms and ensure that he is trapped within the realm-seam, he’ll die of natural causes,” a red-robed youth said.

“If he really did die of natural causes, that would be an absolute waste.” The blue-haired youth shook his head. “I’m not going to explain any further. We have to do everything in our power to kill him, even if it costs

us our very lives! No price is too great to pay if it means killing him. This is our responsibility as Sithe.”

“Understood,” the red-robed youth said.

“Send word to Purgatory,” the blue-haired youth said. “Once the white-robed Daolord reaches Purgatory, Purgatory is to send all of the exiles against him. If they can kill the white-robed Daolord, they’ll not only be allowed to come back to the Sacred Realm, they’ll also be heavily rewarded. As for the person who actually managed to kill the Daolord... I’ll give him control over one of the two Elder Halls.”

“Control over an Elder Hall?”

“T-that’s not appropriate.”

“How can an exile be worthy of controlling an Elder Hall?” Everyone in the hall began to speak out in shock.

The blue-haired youth swept them with his icy gaze, quickly silencing them all. He explained calmly, “Tell them that the white-robed Daolord is incredibly powerful; their only option is to kill him through exhaustion and attrition. They also need to remember to keep the Soul-Eating Mantra active at all times! They need to make sure that they swallow all of the truesoul fragments that are breaking off of him.”

Exalts were not to be questioned or challenged. Long ago, this hidden dimension actually had a total of three Exalts. Later on, this dimension had sent out a grand army to take part in the war, with two of the Exalts personally leading that army. This Exalt had been left behind to guard the hidden dimension... but alas, those two departed Exalts had never returned.

The blue-haired youth turned and departed. With his departure, the Hegemons and Emperors left in the hall quickly scattered as well.

After leaving the hall, two Sithe Hegemons began to quietly whisper amongst themselves while they walked out side-by-side. “This is a Daolord in control of an Eternal Omega Dao. If we can somehow kill him, we’ll be given unimaginable rewards.” These two Hegemons were extremely

excited. “This is doubly true for the Exalt. Even if he dies, once his truesoul returns home, he’ll be rewarded by being brought back to life via spacetime reversal. No wonder the Exalt is so excited over this.”

Reviving an Exalt was incredibly difficult, but the Sithe Lord of Chaos was capable of it. However, this would cause a degree of injury to the prime essences of that Chaosverse; generally speaking, a Lord of Chaos would be unwilling to make that sort of sacrifice.

However... if one accomplished great deeds, one had to be rewarded for it! Killing someone who was in control of an Eternal Omega Dao was viewed as a slightly greater deed than even killing an Autarch would be! If they were successful, then the Exalt would not only be brought back to life, he would be given many gifts as well. It truly would be a case of him rising to preeminence.

“Unfortunately, that Daolord is terrifyingly strong. Otherwise, we’d charge out and kill him ourselves.”

“Yes, he’s absolutely terrifying. Not even the Exalt dares to challenge him. He’s in control of an Eternal Omega Dao, and this is his Chaosverse. With the support of the Dao, he’s virtually invincible.”

“Thankfully, his truesoul is crumbling away! The more he fights, the faster the truesoul will break apart. That’s why the exiles in Purgatory have a chance.”

“However, the Exalt was quite odd about this. Why did he say that the person who killed the white-robed Daolord would be allowed to take control over an Elder Hall? Many of the exiles were local natives. Is he really going to let a local take control over an Elder Hall? They might be our progeny, but they were born in this Chaosverse, not our own; that makes them native to this Chaosverse, and they are born with power over the Dao. If we let one of them take control over an Elder Hall, that person might become a source of trouble.”

“Don’t worry, our progeny swore long ago not to betray us. And... in the end, they are our children. They share our blood. Why would they view us as enemies?”

“They are still natives; they aren’t true Sithe like us. They belong to this Chaosverse, while we belong to a different one. In the end, this is an insurmountable difference.”

“But we Sithe gave birth to them!”

“Enough, enough. Let’s not argue about this.” These two Hegemons were not native to this hidden dimension. Rather, they had invaded this Chaosverse alongside the grand Sithe army.

Clearly, the true Sithe viewed the ‘Sithe progeny’ in this hidden dimension as being different from them.

# Chapter 19: Inside Purgatory

Purgatory. Many exiled major powers were here, many of whom were Hegemons or Emperors. Although there were many Daolords who would be exiled here, the vast majority of them would fail the Daomerge and die! They might be Sithe progeny, but they were born within this Chaosverse and thus incapable training in true Sithe techniques. The Sithe, in turn, were unable to create a set of perfect training techniques that was suited to this Chaosverse. They were diametrically incompatible with it, after all. They would constantly be suppressed and weakened by the local prime essences, making it hard for them to comprehend the Dao here.

All the Sithe could do was bestow some local cultivator techniques to their Sithe progeny while giving them some advice and guidance.

The skies were dark and gloomy, with some fiery red light off in the horizons. A total of three figures were standing within a wilderness area.

“Haha, our chance has come!” The leader of the three was a black-robed man who had a large amount of grass covering his head, and his ‘beard’ was formed from grass as well. His eyes were dark, green, and grim. “The Exalt has bestowed powerful treasures upon us. If we can kill that white-robed Daolord, we’ll skyrocket in status and even be able to control one of the Elder Halls.”

“Big brother... it is clear from the many gifts the Exalt has offered that he truly wishes to kill that white-robed Daolord. But why, then, would he rather give us so many treasures and so many benefits rather than do it himself? None of those fools in the Sacred Realm wish to take part either! There’s only one possible answer to this – the white-robed Daolord is so terrifyingly strong that even Exalts fear him and are unable to beat him.” An ugly old lady said in a hoarse voice, “We need to treat this white-robed Daolord as we would an Exalt, or perhaps someone even more terrifying than an Exalt.”

“Second sister, you speak sense,” the chubby man by her side said immediately.

“Of course I know how terrifying he has to be... but in the end, he’s still failed the Daomerge. We have a chance! Come, let us first go find that white-robed Daolord,” the black-robed man said with a growl. “I’ve had enough of life in Purgatory anyhow. I’d rather die fighting for this opportunity.”

“Agreed.” Both his companions turned solemn as well. Life in Purgatory truly was a living hell. There was little life here, and it was a dry, desolate place. The environment was extremely inhospitable, forcing even Hegemons to tread carefully. Worse, even if you stayed in one place and didn’t move, some danger would usually descend out of nowhere. Every day spent here was a day spent in fear. This was a miserable life indeed.

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Ji Ning continued to fly through the realm-seam, inspecting everything in his path as he flew past the eight realms. Six mortal realms, the Sacred Realm, and Purgatory – by now, Ning had located all of them. However, all seven of the other realms were completely locked; only the gates to Purgatory remained open to him. There was no way to enter the others at all!

“So they left just one door open to me?” Ning chuckled after a moment. “It seems the controllers of this hidden dimension have set up a few traps for me. Fine, fine. I’ll go play with you.”

Swoosh. Ning flew over to the Purgatory Realmgate, then gave it a glance. Ning was rather surprised: “No living beings are around it?” There was no way his senses could be off; clearly, there really were no living beings next to the Realmgate at all. What he didn’t realize was that everyone who had been driven into Purgatory was an exile; they were all extremely crafty and selfish. No one wished to be the first to attack, and so they all hid far away, using various scrying methods to watch the action at the Realmgate.

Completely unmolested, Ning slipped through the Realmgate and arrived at the vast world of Purgatory behind it.

“What an impressive ‘Purgatory’ this world truly is!” The white-robed

Ning descended upon the dark, foul-looking earth. The world around him was covered in darkness, with some flames flickering far off in the distance that were blindingly bright. Around him were many howling tornados that quickly appeared and then dissipated, while space and time were rippling behind him.

“It really is quite chaotic here. This ‘Purgatory’ is filled with countless natural calamities. Even Hegemons would have to tread carefully here, while Daolords are constantly at risk of imminent death.” Ning chuckled. “But it’s better than the realm-seam, at least.” The realm-seam was even more chaotic, to the point where there was nothing stable there at all. At least this place had an environment.

Flames illuminating the distant horizons... this did make for an eerily beautiful sight. The destructive tornados that constantly swept through this place did as well. As for the evil miasmatic aura of this place that give birth to vilefiends? It was nothing but a bit of amusement to Ning.

“Now this place is rather intriguing. I’m almost finished merging the Dao of Wind into my Eternal Omega Sword Dao. I might as well train here for a time.” Although Ning was surrounded by danger, he remained completely relaxed. He immediately sat down in the lotus position.

The white-robed Ning sat down there on the foul ground, his Sword Dao Domain covering the entire area around him, preventing the various types of natural dangers from moving close to him. The place where Ning sat had become sacred grounds, untouched by the filth of Purgatory.

Whoosh. The wind blew past Ning jubilantly, occasionally revealing a few sparks of sword-light which gathered together, eventually transforming back into wind once more.

Ning had reached the Hegemonic level in the Dao of Wind long ago. Now, what he needed to do was to infuse it into his Sword Dao and create his Wind Sword Dao!

Time passed, one day after another.

“What’s going on?”



“Why has that Daolord sat down without even moving an inch?” The exiles who were scrying this place from afar were all puzzled.

“I have to say, that Daolord is pretty powerful. He didn’t have to do anything; his domain alone was able to block out all the local dangers. The chaotic environment of Purgatory is absolutely nothing to him.”

“He’s probably trying to buy time.”

“If he wants to drag this out, I’m more than happy to oblige. I’ve already been trapped here for over eight million chaos cycles. Let’s see who can last longer! I have plenty of patience.”

“Yes, let’s wait.” The exiled powers were all waiting for the right moment to attack.

The years continued to flow on. In the blink of an eye, over half a million years had gone by. All of the exiled powers continued to wait patiently for a good opportunity. Although they all had powerful Sithe weapons and were confident in their abilities, life in Purgatory had long ago ensured that they had become slippery and crafty.

The local environment here was bizarre but beautiful in a twisted way, and the flames flickering off in the distance caused Ning’s face to flicker with reflected light. Suddenly, Ning’s lips curved upwards slightly, and he slowly opened his eyes. A smiling look was in his gaze.

Ning took a sudden, deep breath, causing the wind streams around him to begin to howl.

“GRAAAAAAH!” Suddenly, Ning seemed to let out an enormous roar.

In truth, this was nothing more than a single deep breath, but the breath was so ferocious that it generated a terrifying howling sound which shook the earth. It sounded like the bellowing of a thousand terrifying beasts, and it unleashed countless twisting tornados that were formed from countless streaks of sword-light. The howling wind was like the waves of the ocean, crashing out every which way.

The howling wind shattered everything in its path like a giant shockwave, crushing mountains to dust and shattering even the distant

flames. The wind wave spread out with terrifying speed, moving so fast that even Sith Exalts would be caught offguard by it.

This was Ning's Wind Sword Dao! The terrifying gust of wind caused even spacetime to shudder.

"Flee!"

"Run away!"

Ning's breath was actually aimed at the five Emperors who were located closest to him. They were hundreds of billions of kilometers away from him, but it wasn't enough. The Dao of Wind was a fast Dao to begin with, and the Wind Sword Dao in the form of a howling tempest moved with indescribable speed. Hundreds of billions of kilometers was nothing to it! Although those five Emperors frantically sought to flee, spacetime was suppressed here. There was no way to warp through spacetime, and so they could do nothing save just watch as the terrifying wind howled through the heavens and moved towards them with incomprehensible speed. There was nowhere for them to hide at all.

"Ahhhh!"

"Attack!"

"Impossible."

"Go all-out against him!" The five Emperors felt a sense of despair. Some attempted to use Sith weapons to fight back, but wind by its very nature is a formless thing. The attacks of the Sith weapons flew straight through the wind, completely incapable of affecting the wind at all.

The wind swept through the lands like a giant broom, wiping out everything in its path. Those five Emperors were instantly ground to dust, with just a few of their top treasures and Sith weapons managing to survive.

An area of over three trillion kilometers to Ning's left had been completely swept clean in a fan-shaped manner. The entire world seemed to have become incredibly, perfectly flat.

The other exiles who were watching this from afar were all scared out of their minds. “He did that with just a shout? H-how powerful is he?!” The exiles were starting to tremble with fear.

# Chapter 20: Broken One By One

What they didn't know was that Ji Ning didn't actually 'shout'. He had just mastered his Wind Sword Dao, and had given it a little test by blowing some air out of his lungs, but the air had quickly moved at such incredible speeds that all of the exiles were absolutely stunned and terrified by it.

"He's terrifying."

"He was able to slay Hegemons with ease from a distance of hundreds of billions of kilometers. He truly is unfathomably powerful. All the Hegemons and Emperors in Purgatory combined might stand a chance, but if we were to fight separately we would be defeated one-by-one."

"Join forces. Our only chance is to join forces." The exiles were all extraordinarily talented figures; they instantly knew what they had to do. But... it was already too late!

"Now that I have mastered the Wind Sword Dao, it is time to make my move. I certainly can't win a war of attrition against them." Ning rose to his feet, taking a single step forwards and warping towards the location where the five slain Hegemons had been at. He waved his hand, collecting all of the fallen treasures and Sith weapons. These were all fine treasures that he could either leave to the Three Realms or gift to his disciples and friends.

Next, Ning took another step forwards and reappeared next to a lake which was hundreds of billions of kilometers.

Two Emperors were by the lakeside, carefully scrying the area where Ning had been just a moment ago. Suddenly, a dimensional ripple appeared next to them, followed by a white-robed Daolord appearing from it. His appearance terrified the two Emperors so much that their legs went soft. "How is this possible? How did he find us? We set up formations early on to track from very far away if anyone moves close to us. It didn't look like the Daolord made any preparations either. How did he do this?!"

They couldn't understand it at all. In truth, this enormous hidden dimension did put Ning under quite a bit of pressure. Godsense was

blocked out; his only choice was to use his eyes. However, his vision was also impaired by many types of invisible energy, limiting the distance at which he could see.

“I spent half a million years training next to the Realmgate mastering the Wind Sword Dao, just for this moment,” Ning mused.

If he remained far away from his enemies and was unable to locate them, he would end up in a passive situation where he could only endure attacks from them. This was why he chose to sit down and master his Wind Sword Dao. Ning had previously spent three thousand chaos cycles training in various Daos; if he had chosen to focus on the Wind Sword Dao, he would’ve completed it long ago. However, he had not; he had let things happen normally, preferring to spend more of his time on the more-difficult Space Sword Dao. There was no need to focus that much on a fairly simple Sword Dao.

In Purgatory, he was completely unable to locate any of his foes, and so he chose to focus on the Wind Sword Dao. The wind was something without form or shape, but it blew across the entire world. Thanks to the Wind Sword Dao, Ning was able to ride the wind with his senses and accurately locate every single one of the Hegemons and Emperors! He might not be able to see them with the naked eye, but he could sense them with the wind!

“Flee!” The terrified Emperors hurriedly sought to flee, but Ning glared at them. His gaze seemed to solidify and transform into two streams of wind. At first, the wind seemed quite gentle, but when it blew past the two Emperors it transformed into a raging gale. The two Emperors tried to flee, but the gale was composed of countless tiny streaks of sword-light that effortlessly ground them into dust.

“Next.” Ning didn’t even waste time on picking up their treasures. Instead, he immediately warped through space towards the next squad of enemies.

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If Ning wanted to actually use some of his energy, he could actually use

a Northbow sword to pierce through spacetime and slay them from afar. However, that took up too much of his power. He wasn't willing to resort to this. If he wanted to kill them while conserving his energy, he had to kill them at close range.

This was because this hidden dimension had a suppressive effect on his Sword Dao Domain, preventing it from expanding to its usual size. When Ning had used his Wind Sword Dao to form a Sword Dao Domain that used a howling wind to assault his foes, he had only been able to strike from a distance of a few hundreds of billions of kilometers. At this distance, Ning was able to use his Wind Sword Dao to suppress spacetime and prevent his foes from fleeing.

The problem was, there were other foes who were trillions of kilometers away. Some were even more distant! Ning was unable to suppress spacetime at such a great distance! When his enemies saw him attacking, they would be able to escape via blinking away. That's why he had to get close to them, then attack!

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"The white-robed Daolord is attacking us!"

"He's warping through space to attack us. Hurry up and join forces! If we stay separated like this, we're all going to die." The exiles were absolutely terrified by now.

Whoosh. Ning appeared before yet another squad. This squad had a total of three Emperors. When they saw the white-robed Daolord appear, their hearts were filled with terror. They didn't hesitate at all, immediately unleashing their most powerful Sithe weapons to battle against Ning. They knew that escape was completely impossible; they had no chance of successfully fleeing at all.

Two of the Emperors each wielded a strange scepter which glowed with a blurry light that swept out to cover Ning. Not even Ning's Sword Dao Domain was able to block this blurry light, as it was formless and incorporeal. It completely covered Ning.

The third Emperor wielded a longspear. He suddenly threw it forwards,

sending it howling through the air like a stream of light that shot through the Sword Dao Domain and stabbed at Ning.

“What a powerful illusion! My Dao-heart is perfect and I have reached a high level of mastery over illusions, but I was still slightly affected by it. It seems I need to upgrade my Dao of Illusions to Hegemony as soon as possible. When I ran into that Sithe Exalt Dauber, I was slightly affected by him as well.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. The Sithe truly had reached incomprehensible heights in every single Dao.

Although Ning was slightly affected by the illusions, he remained extremely clear-minded and his will was resolute. As for the powerful longspears shooting towards him? Ning simply stood there, not even moving. He took control over his Sword Dao Domain, transforming countless streams of sword-light into streams of water and gusts of wind that blasted at the longspears. Although the spear was able to tear through the obstruction of the sword-light, its trajectory was slightly changed.

Given the distances at which they were fighting, even the tiniest of adjustments would result in a wide miss. By the time the longspears flew past Ning, it missed by over thirty meters.

“If many of them attacked me at the same time with a variety of attacks, I might be in a bit of trouble. Just three of them? Nothing to fear at all.” As Ning dealt with the enemy attacks, he launched attacks of his own as well. He sent a howling wind towards his foes, and by the time he dodged the longspears his wind had already ground those three Emperors into dust.

Only then did Ning reach out to grab the now-ownerless longspears. “Next.” Ning immediately warped through space, moving towards the next squad.

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The Sacred Realm. The iridescent Elder Hall. The blue-haired youth and his two disciples were standing before a giant illusory image which was currently displaying the scene of Ning slaying the exiles. As the controller of this entire hidden dimension who was also responsible for keeping an eye on the outside world, he had the complete ability to watch over

everything which happened within this dimension. Every action Ning took was witnessed by him.

“Those fools.” The blue-haired youth’s face tightened, and he focused his gaze on the image as he sent his godsense out of the Elder Hall and into Purgatory. “Spacetime, freeze!” The blue-haired youth immediately suppressed spacetime, seeking to block Ning’s advance.

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After Ning warped forwards to kill two different squads in Purgatory, the Exalt in the Sacred Realm was finally incited to action, suppressing spacetime in the region around Ning. The exiles, however, did not suffer from spacetime suppression. Thus, they were able to quickly warp through space to join together, while Ning was noticeably slowed down.

“I haven’t even picked up any treasures yet. The major power behind this hidden dimension has already chosen to suppress spacetime around me, eh?” Ning chuckled. “But do you think suppressing spacetime will be enough to bar my path?”

Whoosh. Ning once more tore a forcible hole through the void before him, creating a rippling spatial tunnel which sent him hurtling more than six hundred billion kilometers away.

This was the power of his Space Sword Dao! Compared to the might of his Space Sword Dao, even the Autarchs who didn’t specialize in the Dao of Space such as Autarch Titanos or Autarch Ekong were slightly inferior when it came to tearing through space. The Sithe Exalt was using the power of the Elder Hall to suppress spacetime around him, but Ning conserved his energy and used just the power of the Dao itself to tear through the frozen spacetime and teleport a fairly short distance!

After teleporting more than six hundred billion kilometers, he was already outside the region of suppressed spacetime. As a result, he was able to quickly teleport towards yet another squad, which he dispatched with ease.

This sight truly shocked the Exalt in control of the Sacred Realm. “I knew that I wouldn’t be able stop him if he went all-out... but he was



actually able to warp through spacetime just by using the power of his Sword Dao Domain?” The Sithe Exalt was scarcely able to believe it. “He’s already completely surpassed me in terms of mastery over the Dao of Space? But his Dao is that of the sword... how could he have reached such heights in the Dao of Space as well?”

He didn’t want to believe it, but the display before him was showing him images of Ning dealing with one squad after another. The various squads of Emperors began to flee frantically, and slowly some were beginning to finally join forces together.

# Chapter 21: Thirty-Six Stone Pillars

“Master, what should we do?”

“If we let things continue like this, the Hegemons and Emperors in Purgatory will be so terrified and ineffective that half of them will be massacred before they manage to join forces!” The two disciples next to the Exalt were all rather anxious.

The blue-haired youth calmed down again. He stared at the images within the illusory ‘painting’ and said in a cold voice, “You underestimate the exiles. They might be useless in all other respects, but one thing they are good at is staying alive. That white-robed Daolord will at most be able to wipe out 30% of the Hegemons and Emperors. By then, the rest will have banded together. I’ve bestowed two precious Apocalypse-class treasures to Purgatory. I wouldn’t be surprised if the Daolord died there.”

“Alright.” The two disciples next to him nodded in agreement. Apocalypse-class treasures were the most powerful treasures the hidden dimension had at its disposal, aside from Daoguard Towers. Previously, they had used four triangular Calamity-class treasures against Ning; those were a bit weaker, but they were also easier to control. Apocalypse-class treasures were much more complicated to control.

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The skies were dark. Flames continued to blaze at the ends of Purgatory, and spacetime remained completely suppressed. Ning tore through spacetime, repeatedly blinking forwards and slaying the Hegemons and Emperors at high speed. However, this process took time. The Hegemons and Emperors who were not destroyed during Ning’s first wave of assaults were quickly fleeing towards each other and banding together.

A short while later.

“They fled quite fast.” The white-robed Ning stood at the peak of a tall mountain. He swept the land with his gaze. Although he wasn’t able to see anything, he was able to rely on the wind to determine that the remaining Hegemons and Emperors had already banded together into two

large squads. They had begun to activate the power of their Sithe weapons and had set up many traps as they awaited Ning's arrival.

"These two groups will be a bit hard to deal with." Ning could sense how dangerous these two groups would be, and so he chuckled: "Time to go pick up those treasures first."

Whoosh. Ning leisurely warped through space, going to the places where he had previously slain Hegemons and Emperors, then picking up their fallen Sithe treasures.

"What's that terrifying Daolord up to?"

"Has he come yet?"

"Not yet."

"I found him!" The exiles all had their own special techniques, and some were actually able to monitor all of Ning's actions thanks to aid from the Sacred Realm. "He's... actually looting our treasures?"

The exiles were all rather speechless as they watched Ning leisurely saunter from place to place, picking up all of the treasures. He hadn't done so earlier, as the battles had been very fast and he didn't want to waste the time. The surviving exiles had all been focused on running for their lives, and they similarly didn't stop to pick up treasures.

"Nineteen Sithe treasures, each with their own marvelous properties. All of them are quite strong, and some are really powerful." Ning couldn't help but grin. The Sithe had naturally prepared many powerful weapons to use against him.

After picking up all the weapons, Ning gracefully warped through space to arrive before the first squad of Hegemons and Emperors.

"Only two squads are left in all of Purgatory, but each squad has a large number of Hegemons and Emperors as well as special weapons. They are actually quite dangerous." Ning stared towards the desolate wilderness before him, which held an enormous dark-red castle that looked almost like some sort of monstrosity.

The castle had a total of nine towers, and a total of thirty-six strange stone pillars were scattered around it within an area of roughly 1.8 billion kilometers. These stone pillars all had different weapons hovering above them.

“Come over!”

“Come and die!” There were twenty-plus Hegemons and Emperors within the castle, and they all stared murder towards Ning.

This castle was an enormous fort that was meant for war. Thirty-six Emperors were needed to unleash its full power. Although there weren't enough Emperors present, many had avatars who could help out, and so they were still able to make full use of this castle's power.

“Hm. Now how should I deal with this castle...” Ning stared at the castle from afar, not daring to move too close to it. He could sense that if he moved within ten billion kilometers of the castle, he would suffer a terrifying attack.

“I wonder what type of attack this castle can unleash. Those thirty-six stone pillars seem to be quite dangerous as well,” Ning mused. He currently had no information at all regarding what type of attacks those castles could unleash; if he wanted to know, he'd have to go test it out. Once he did, however, he might fall to their fury.

“Ahahaha... you there! White-robed Daolord! Aren't you supposed to be a real badass? Why aren't you moving?” A loud, mocking, angry shout rang out from within the castle, spreading out tens of billions of kilometers and shaking the world beyond it.

“I'm thinking, I'm thinking! I'm trying to decide how I should deal with this castle of yours,” Ning replied with a laugh.

Ning continued to scrutinize the castle as he spoke. He could sense that an invisible field of energy was surrounding the castle up to a distance of ten billion kilometers. Spacetime was completely suppressed within this region, and those thirty-six stone pillars were rippling with power as well.

“You can stare at this castle for ten or a hundred chaos cycles, but you

still won't be able to see the mysteries which my castle contains," the angry voice replied. "Just keep watching!"

Ning was neither irritated nor impatient by this response. As for the other squad of Hegemons and Emperors, they watched from afar without moving towards him.

Both Apocalypse-class treasures needed a large number of Hegemons and Emperors working together to control them. There was no real way for them to work together; it was better for them to fight against Ning individually.

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Ning spent over half a month analyzing the castle and ruminating over the mysterious runes covering the stone pillars. He also carefully attuned himself to the various auras and ripples emanating from the castle. Finally, he was able to come to a simple, preliminary conclusion.

"This castle's attacks should be of the area-attack variety, while the thirty-six stone pillars will all focus their attacks on me, trying to make it impossible for me to dodge." Ning nodded to himself. "The Sithe have probably come to a rough estimation of my power and abilities. This castle might actually be a perfect counter for me."

Ning was extremely fast, but the Sithe Exalt had specifically chosen this castle to counter Ning's speed.

"Even so, I really don't have any other choices. I have to advance and break through all obstacles." For Ning to die was one thing, as his truesoul was already disintegrating. Dying here, however, meant that the Paragon of Pills wouldn't be able to escape either. Ning was unwilling to see this.

Time to go all out and destroy everything in his path!

Whoosh. Ning suddenly moved, transforming into a streak of light that shot towards the distant castle. He soon entered the range of ten billion kilometers.

"Attack!" The Hegemon inside the ugly castle immediately issued the attack order, and the nine castle towers lit up simultaneously, shooting out

nine semi-translucent beams of light that cut through space. The nine beams of light shot out at nine of the stone pillars, then turned and also shot through other stone pillars. The beams of light continued to pass through the various pillars, quickly forming an enormous spiderweb of light. As this happened, the weapons above the thirty-six stone pillars slowly began to build up power.

Ning watched silently as he approached the castle. Six billion kilometers. Five billion kilometers. Four billion kilometers. Three billion kilometers...

Right as Ning moved within three billion kilometers of the castle, some sort of mechanism seemed to be activated.

Hiss! The top of a stone pillar shot out a ray of deep azure light that transformed into an enormous azure serpent which was three hundred thousand meters long. The serpent immediately flew towards Ning.

Crackle! The top of a second stone pillar manifested a giant eyeball with a strange vertical pupil. The vertical pupil shot out a streak of blood-colored light towards Ning.

All sorts of attacks filled the air, including attacks of bone-chilling cold, a miasmatic black mist, a vast and evil palm, and layers of folded spacetime waves. These attacks shot out at Ning from every direction, clearly seeking to surround and submerge Ning, giving him no chance to escape as they sought to annihilate him.

Ning immediately understood what a deadly situation he had just stepped into.

Powerful Sithe weapons were able to attack at incredible speeds. When he was attacked by the Daoguard Tower which had trapped the Paragon of Pills, he had actually been forced to use his own energy to utilize evasion-arts to dodge! In terms of raw speed, these attacks were actually even faster than Ning's own speed. Dodging just one of them would require energy. Dodging thirty-six attacks of incredible accuracy and which were all coordinated with each other? How hard would that be?

As for destroying the attacks with raw force? If he tried to do so, his own speed would be affected and he would suffer one attack after another.

Ning wouldn't dare to use his own body to resist all these attacks. He would have to rely on his sword-arts, which meant he would have to strike out dozens of times. If even the outer perimeter forced him to strike this many times... this single castle alone would be enough to exhaust him to death.

"Wind! Lightning!" Ning raised his two arms, pulling out a pair of Northbow swords from the sheath on his back. He now had a Northbow sword in each hand, and he sent out two streaks of sword-light at the same time, employing his Wind Sword Dao and his Lightning Sword Dao.

Boom! Boom! Ning's speed suddenly skyrocketed while two streaks of light appeared behind him. The first streak of light crackled like lightning, while the second was as ghostly as the wind. They seemed to form a pair of wings, with one being of lightning and the second being of wind.

Ning had gained certain insights when he had mastered the Wind Sword Dao. The Five Elements were all able to work together as they were part of a set, and the Wind Sword Dao and the Lightning Sword Dao were also able to work together. The wind and the lightning worked in concert, propelling Ning to the maximum level of speed he was currently capable of.

# Chapter 22: The Storm

Whoosh. Ji Ning moved forwards at a terrifying speed, instantly avoiding two attacks that swished right past him.

It really was like dancing on the edge of a knife. Ning himself had never been in such an incredibly dangerous situation, and he wasn't certain that he would survive it. All he could do was to do his best. His wings of electric sword-light and wind sword-light had granted him incredible speed, allowing him to dodge repeatedly.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Suddenly, the semi-translucent rays of light began to swing over and shoot towards Ning. This caused Ning to immediately grow a bit nervous. Aside from the attacks from the thirty-six stone pillars, he also had to deal with the semi-translucent rays of light. Dodging became even more difficult for Ning now, and the light in this area had long ago transformed into an enormous web.

"Dodge. Dodge. Dodge." Under tremendous pressure, Ning continuously dodged at incredible speeds and moved in extremely unpredictable, bizarre ways.

"He's actually dodging?" The Emperors and Hegemons in the castle were all stupefied by this. As they saw it, these attacks were so ridiculously fast that none of them would even be able to react in time. Ning, however, was somehow able to continuously find an empty spot and avoid the furious attacks, evading and dodging past the attacks. Not a single one of them managed to hit him!

"Mixing the Wind Sword Dao and the Lightning Sword Dao together feels absolutely wonderful." This was Ning's first time using two different Sword Daos together, and as he continued to dodge the thunder wings and wind wings on his back became increasingly agile and nimble.

He was both fast and unpredictable. The two pairs of wings worked together in an increasingly marvelous way, allowing Ning to become increasingly faster and nimbler as well.

"Wind can support the lightning's momentum, while lightning can



reinforce the wind's strength." Ning suddenly transformed into two howling streaks of lightning and wind as his two sets of wings merged together. Now, there was lightning in the wind and a gale in the lightning.

Fast, savage, dominating, unscrutable, mysterious.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! The blurry light of wind and lightning flashed past the semi-translucent rays of light. It avoided the attacks from the thirty-six stone pillars with ease as it repeatedly found the openings in the attacks, and it continued to advance towards the castle.

"How is this possible? How is he able to completely dodge all of our attacks? This is impossible!" The Hegemons and Emperors in the castle were growing increasingly nervous. If they were fighting ordinary cultivators, this castle alone would be more than enough to stop their opponents in their tracks. However, Ning was comparable to an Autarch in power! If he managed to get close to their castle, they would lose! This was because Ning was more than strong enough to use his sword-arts to pierce through the castle, and he could also blink straight inside of it.

During the Dawn War, this was exactly what Autarch Bolin and the others had done; they had blinked straight inside the various warships, with the external defenses of no use against them whatsoever. Thus, the only way the castle could be a threat to Ning was by using external attacks against him. The problem was, they could clearly see that those attacks were completely incapable of stopping Ning.

"Go out, go out! All of you, go out! Use every Sithe weapon you have to assault this Daolord!" the Hegemon in charge commanded. "We have to stop him and prevent him from getting close to the castle. If he gets close to us, we're finished!"

"Everyone, head out!"

"All Hegemons and Emperors on standby must head out immediately."

"If you can disrupt his tempo even slightly, we'll be able to land an attack on him. One attack will lead to another, and he might even die by our hands."

“Let’s do this!” In truth, the Hegemons and Emperors inside were beginning to panic as well. Alas, most of them were needed to control the castle. Even though they had avatars, in the end the castle was only able to send out a total of three Emperors. These Emperors each had two or three powerful Sithe weapons. They stood on the surface of the castle, staring at the distant storm-shaped Ning. Gritting their teeth, they began to attack and attempt to knock Ning off his rhythm.

Swish. A chain flew out towards Ning, seeking to wrap itself around him. Alas, before it even reached Ning it was struck by a semi-translucent ray of light and sent tumbling to the ground.

Clearly, the rays of light could not differentiate between friend and foe. The castle was using many different types of attacks to assault Ning, and these attacks were harmonized with each other to a tremendous agree, ensuring that they wouldn’t cancel each other out. Unfortunately, it was hard for these three Emperors to fully avoid the semi-translucent attacks from the castle.

“Damnit!” The three Emperors were being driven mad with rage.

Alas, their rage was of no use. Ning continued to advance at high speed as he gained more and more familiarity with mixing his Wind Sword Dao and Lightning Sword Dao together. None of the attacks were able to land on him at all. The three Emperors did their absolute utmost to disturb Ning’s movements, but although an occasional attack managed to get close to Ning, none of them were able to actually threaten Ning at all.

One billion kilometers... nine hundred million kilometers... eight hundred million kilometers... Ning moved closer and closer to the castle, and as he did so a full-blown panic began to erupt amongst the Hegemons and Emperors inside. They all knew that once Ning reached the tower, they would die.

“Let’s run!” When Ning reached a distance of two hundred million kilometers from the tower, the Emperors inside began to break down. None of them harbored any further hopes of being able to stop Ning.

Boom! The entire castle transformed into a streak of light that hurriedly

began to fly away. At the same time, the castle deactivated its spacetime suppression field as it began to teleport away.

“Do you really think you’ll be able to escape?” As soon as the castle began to flee, the semi-translucent rays of light all completely vanished. Now completely unimpeded, Ning instantly appeared in front of the castle. He reached out with one hand, touching the castle’s exterior.

“Blink.” Ning used just a tiny amount of Immortal energy to command the Dao to envelop him, instantly blinking him inside. The tough external shell of the castle seemed to have transformed into a gentle curtain of water which Ning easily passed through, arriving inside.

The Hegemons and Emperors inside all revealed looks of despair.

Slash! A streak of sword-light howled outwards, slaying two of the Emperors on the spot.

“Put down all of your treasures and accept capture. I’m willing to spare your lives for now,” Ning said.

“Huh? Spare our lives?” The Hegemons and Emperors were all rather shocked. Ning had pursued them with such ferocity and had instantly slain two Emperors upon entering the castle. This had truly scared them out of their minds.

Ning frowned. “It seems you would rather die than live, then?”

“No, we want to live! Live!”

“All of us want to live!” The Hegemons and Emperors immediately divested themselves of all their treasures and Sithe weapons, then obediently lined up in front of Ning.

Ning waved his hand, pulling them all into his estate-world. He then waved his hand a second time, pulling the treasures into a different estate-world.

“These so-called ‘Sithe progeny’ are still members of our own Chaosverse. I hope that they aren’t absolutely loyal to the Sithe,” Ning mused. When Ning had first arrived at Purgatory, his goal was to weaken

the enemy as much as possible; there was naturally no way he would show mercy. But now that he already gained victory and entered the castle? Ning wasn't going to just murder these people unless necessary.

Ning had been able to immediately recognize two of the Emperors as true Sithe. They were being ignored and suppressed by the prime essences of the Chaosverse, which was proof of their identity! The others, however, were actually 'Sithe descendants'! They were creatures of this Chaosverse who had been born and bred here.

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Ning put away the entire castle, then collected the thirty-six stone pillars as well. He was in a superb mood. "I defeated those Hegemons and Emperors, broke into the castle, and managed to avoid using too much power."

Ning was feeling absolutely wonderful. During this battle, the only thing he had done was use his wind sword-light and lightning sword-light to dodge and evade. Evasion-arts consumed much less of his energy than full-force blows; all that flying which Ning had engaged in was perhaps at most on par with what would be consumed by a single sword-blow. Blinking into the castle used up very little energy as well.

He had been able to achieve his goals with a minimum amount of effort. How could he NOT be happy? He began to warp through space, arriving at somewhere else where the other Hegemons and Emperors were gathered.

"Eh?" Ning stared forwards, rather puzzled. There were a series of palaces off in the distance, with the central palace being the largest one. It was surrounded by a scattering of smaller palaces, and they were all connected into an enormous palace complex. Ning could vaguely sense the auras of many Hegemons and Emperors within the palace complex; there had to be more than twenty of them scattered throughout that place.

"I have the feeling that this palace complex is even more dangerous than the castle." For some inexplicable reason, Ning shivered. He knew that this was his subconscious warning him of the danger. "Judging from how the palaces have been laid out, this should be some sort of enormous

formation.”

Ning couldn't help but feel a bit of wariness when faced with such a formation.

“There's no rush.” Ning sat down in the lotus position. “Let me first spend some time meditating on my Wind Sword Dao and Lightning Sword Dao.” When he had been flying forwards at high speed earlier, he suddenly had the feeling that he could merge his Wind Sword Dao and Lightning Sword Dao on a deeper level.

It was similar to how Ning was planning to perfectly join his Space Sword Dao and Time Sword Dao into a Spacetime Sword Dao. Ning now felt certain that he could also perfectly join his Lightning Sword Dao and his Wind Sword Dao together into a ‘Storm’ Sword Dao.

“Perhaps I might find an unexpected surprise from this.” Ning immediately closed his eyes, allowing his awesome Sword Dao Domain to spread out around him as he began to meditate.

# Chapter 23: Dire Straits

Ji Ning remained seated in the lotus position. Gusts of wind howled past him, occasionally coming together into a mighty storm which was filled with flickers of lightning.

Time passed, one year after the other. The Emperors and Hegemons in the palace complex were all beginning to grow rather anxious and impatient.

“Why hasn’t the Daolord attacked yet?”

“I can’t believe he’s actually in the mood to train.” The Hegemons and Emperors were all panicking. The calmer Ning was, the more panicked they felt. It wasn’t that their Dao-hearts were weak, it was that Ning’s performance in battle had been absolutely terrifying.

“Gentlemen, will our formations be capable of stopping this Daolord? The castle was also Apocalypse-class, but the Daolord managed to defeat it with ease. Although these formations seem quite profound and powerful to us, this Daolord might be able to solve them with ease. If that happens, we’ll be in serious trouble.” Many Emperors were worried.

“Relax. The Exalt himself bestowed it upon us. I imagine he did so for a very good reason.”

“But the Exalt bestowed the Apocalypse-class castle as well, right?”

“Enough, enough. It’s far too late for worrying about things like this. Either we’ll win or we’ll die in battle. There are no other options! Besides, as all of you are aware, the castle was something meant for head-on battles, while we are relying on profound formations. If he can’t solve the formations, he’ll be trapped and perish.”

“You aren’t him. Who knows what tricks he might have up his sleeve?”

“Even if he DOES manage to solve the formations, it isn’t as though you have better ones that can be used! Remember, we’re exiles! This might be extremely dangerous, but it is also our only hope of survival.”

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This was absolute torture for the Hegemons and Emperors, and the Sithe Exalt in the Sacred Realm wasn't feeling much better. Ning, however, focused all of his efforts on his training. This time, he meditated for an extremely long period of time. Over half a chaos cycle went past before he finished.

BOOM!

One day, the anxiously waiting Hegemons and Emperors suddenly heard a loud, rumbling sound appear in the area around the seated white-robed youth. Lightning howled like wind through the skies, while the wind itself flickered with crackling electricity. This awesome storm of lightning and wind possessed incredible momentum and ferocity.

Under the watchful gazes of the nervous Hegemons and Emperors, the white-robed youth finally opened his eyes.

"The Storm Sword Dao." Ning nodded in understanding. It had been easier than he had expected to master his Storm Sword Dao, even easier than it had been to simply master the individual Wind Sword Dao and Lightning Sword Dao. "Perhaps they are innately meant to be used together," Ning mused.

The Dao of Space and the Dao of Time were naturally meant to be together. When used simultaneously, they would easily and naturally come together to form the Dao of Spacetime. This was because time and space were indelibly linked together like two spokes on a wheel that fit together perfectly.

The Dao of Lightning, the Dao of Metal, the Dao of Water, the Dao of Space, and Ning's Eternal Omega Sword Dao were all completely irrelevant to each other. There wasn't really a good way to link them together, making it extremely difficult to join them together.

However, the Five Elements, the Storm, and Spacetime were all 'sets' that contained highly compatible Daos.

"It is time." Ning rose to his feet and stared at the distant palace complex. The entire palace complex was absolutely teeming with formations that were both complex and abstruse, but Ning held no fear of

them.

Clink! He reached out to draw a Northbow sword from the sheath on his back, then began to walk towards the distant palace complex.

“He’s coming!”

“He’s headed straight for us.”

“That white-robed Daolord is coming. Quick! Everyone, make your preparations! When he’s trapped in our formations, we need to immediately launch all of our attacks against him and hold nothing back. If we give him enough time to breach our formations, we’ll be finished.”

“It’ll definitely take him some time to defeat this formation. We need to do our best to kill him.” The Hegemons and Emperors all stared at the white-robed Daolord walking towards them, sword in hand. It was as though they were looking at an absolutely terrifying monster. The only thing giving them some confidence was the fact that they were protected by an ancient and powerful Apocalypse-class formation.

Ning slowly sauntered forwards, the power of his Sword Dao Domain on full display as he used it to cover the region before him. It quickly spread out to cover the entire palace complex, which was hardened into a single entity. Ning’s Sword Dao Domain alone wouldn’t be enough to shake it in the slightest. The smaller palaces remained quietly rooted in place, not releasing any of their power at all.

“I want to see just how powerful they are.” Ning suddenly moved, transforming into an illusory shadow that shot towards a pathway which he felt was critical.

BOOM! As soon as Ning stepped into the palace complex, the earth began to shake beneath his feet while the skies began to change. The awesome might of the complex was fully unleashed, and the scenery in front of him completely transformed into a field of blurry light.

Ning was the only person flying through the region of blurry light. Whoosh! He instantly accelerated to fly ten billion kilometers through the light, but found himself still trapped within it.



“Hm. I feel as though I’m flying in place, as though I haven’t actually moved at all.” Ning unleashed his Sword Dao Domain, sending out countless streaks of sword-light but was only able to extend them to a distance of a million kilometers. Beyond this distance, there was no way for them to advance any further!

“What an incredible formation. It actually created its own spacetime continuum.” Ning began to ponder on his next step. Given his mastery over the Space Sword Dao, he was able to see some traces of how spacetime worked here but wasn’t even close to actually being able to solve it.

This place was already a spacetime continuum unto itself, and he was trapped inside it, unable to leave. “So they plan to simply trap me here?” Ning shook his head and chuckled. “If the Sithe truly wished to just trap me, they would’ve kept me locked within the dimensional realm-seam. There would’ve been no way for me to escape on my own.”

Thus, there was no way the Sithe would simply leave him trapped here. If they wanted to do that, they had plenty of other tools at their disposal.

“Eh?” Ning turned his gaze to one side. He could sense that spacetime was changing a bit there.

Boom! A streak of dense and dark astral light shot out, filled with malice and wickedness. It was as though endless amounts of sin had been concentrated in this attack, and it was flying towards Ning at terrifying speeds. Ning could sense that this dark astral light posed a threat to him. If he wanted to actually block it, he would have to use his sword.

The black astral light was simply too fast. Ning’s form suddenly flickered, emitting a thunderous boom as a wild storm behind him which almost instantly pushed him out of the trajectory of the dark astral light aside. The astral light flew past Ning, burying itself deep into the edge of this spacetime continuum and then completely disappearing.

Swoosh. Ning immediately charged towards the place where the black astral light had come from, which was also the place he had sensed spacetime changing.

“Spacetime was temporarily parted there.” Ning charged towards that area with his Northbow sword at the ready, but halfway there he came to a halt because spacetime had gone back to normal. No further fluctuations could be seen.

Just one heartbeat later... riiiiip! Another spacetime ripple appeared somewhere else, followed by yet another attack. This time, the attack was an extremely gentle-looking alabaster finger that shot straight towards Ning, almost instantly appearing right in front of him. Ning once more used his Storm Sword Dao to evade the attack, moving with almost ghostly speed.

“Damn!” Ning’s face paled slightly. He knew what his opponents were intending. He was trapped within this tiny spacetime continuum and unable to escape, while his Sithe opponents were able to use their many powerful weapons to assault him time and time again at extremely close range. His only choice was to use his divine power to execute evasion-arts to dodge these attacks! Thankfully, he had just mastered the Storm Sword Dao, which specialized in speed and agility. As a result, he was able to dodge while using just a tiny amount of energy... but it would still add up.

If this continued, his energy supply would continuously deplete while his truesoul began to crumble apart at an increasingly fast rate. Each time he used any of his power, the cracks across his truesoul would widen and his lifespan would grow shorter!

“How should I handle this? What’s the best way to break through this continuum?” Ning was beginning to grow anxious. He scanned the area around him, but it remained a blur of light. There were no flaws or openings at all for this spacetime continuum. An opening might appear when an attack was launched from the outside world, but that opening would quickly close up and be sealed away. Each time, just a single attack was launched, and so the opening was extremely small in size. The Hegemons and Emperors in the outside world could simply wait for the right moment to attack, giving Ning no chance to flee through the openings at all.

All sorts of attacks began to fly at Ning from within this spacetime

continuum, and each time they launched from far away. Ning was forced to repeatedly use his evasion-arts to dodge. This was the most conservative use of his energy possible.

His power continued to deplete. Ning couldn't help but feel a sense of urgency as he pondered over the solution for breaking apart this formation. He never would've imagined that Purgatory would be enough to force him into such dire straits.

Just like that, Ning was actually in mortal danger.

"Ahahaha! He has no answer for our formation! He can't solve it!"

"If he can't solve it, he's doomed." The exiles were overjoyed, all their earlier concerns having vanished like the wind. Apocalypse-class formations truly were incredible. The white-robed Daolord was completely unable to overcome this formation, which meant that killing him would be simplicity itself.

# Chapter 24: Struggle

“Is the very first master of an Eternal Omega Dao their Chaosverse has given birth to going to die by my hands today?” The blue-haired Exalt watching the battle from the Sacred Realm felt excited as well. “Both of the Apocalypse-class treasures I gave those exiles in Purgatory are aimed squarely at that Daolord’s weaknesses. The castle had area attacks which that Daolord should’ve been unable to dodge; by all rights, it should’ve exhausted him to death! Who would’ve thought that he would possess such incredible speed. Now that we’ve trapped him within our spacetime formation, I refuse to believe he’ll be able to break free.”

Last time, Ji Ning had indeed very nearly died within that castle. Thankfully, the combination of the Wind Sword Dao and the Lightning Sword Dao had granted Ning a level of speed which surpassed what the Sithe Exalt had expected, rendering all of those attacks useless.

This time, however, Ning wouldn’t be so lucky. He had been trapped within a separate spacetime continuum, and breaking free would be extremely difficult.

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The Sithe Exalt in the Sacred Realm and the Hegemons in Purgatory were unable to contain their delight at Ning’s impending death.

Within the formation itself, the field of blurry spacetime remained completely separated from the outside world. Ning was still trapped within, and his Sword Dao Domain strained against the continuum to no avail at all. There was nothing he could do.

Far away from him, a spacetime ripple suddenly appeared, followed by a fiery red bird screeching as it shot towards Ning. Even as it attacked, the distant spacetime hole quickly healed and vanished.

Boom! Ning used his Storm Sword Dao to dodge once more. “I’m going to die if this continues.” Ning couldn’t find any flaws to exploit at all, and so all he could do was wave his hand and produce a precious pagoda in front of himself. This was one of the many Sithe treasures Ning had

acquired.

Swoosh! Ning instantly entered the tower. “I hope it can last for a fairly long period of time.” For now, Ning’s only option was to rely on the tower’s defenses to buy him some time.

Ning waved his hand, causing Azurefiend’s avatar to appear next to him. “Master?” Azurefiend’s avatar looked at Ning.

“Hurry up and take control over this tower, then put your Immortal energy into it. Focus all your efforts on defending,” Ning barked mentally. It wasn’t worth it for him to waste his own Immortal energy on activating Sithe weapons.

“Understood.” Azurefiend’s avatar didn’t hesitate at all. He could sense from Ning’s grim expression how much danger they were in, and he immediately poured his Immortal energy into the tower, causing the many runes and barriers on its surface to light up.

“He hid inside a tower.”

“The tower won’t be able to dodge effectively. Just destroy it.” The Hegemons and Emperors were out for blood. They weren’t going to give Ning any chance to rest at all.

Slash! A dazzling streak of golden light flew out and appeared in front of the tower, delivering a vicious blow to it.

Although Ning was able to control the tower and use it to fly around, the attacks were simply too fast. Ning himself had to rely on using evasion-arts to dodge. There was no way this type of tower-type treasure would be able to do the same. Even if it could... he would still be using up his energy, right? The entire point of Ning hiding inside the tower was to save as much power as possible.

Boom! The surface of the tower erupted after being struck by golden light, causing a series of ripples to appear. The barrier remained unbroken, even though it looked a bit damaged. These were attacks that could threaten even Ning, after all; they were more than powerful enough to wreck ordinary Sithe artifacts.

“Hurry up and bind this treasure as well!” Ning tossed Azurefiend’s avatar another treasure, one that looked like a star. It seemed somewhat similar to the Blacksun, but it was a bit weaker.

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“It isn’t breaking apart? Hit it simultaneously at two different places!” The Hegemons and Emperors quickly decided to launch two simultaneous attacks against it.

As these two apocalyptic attacks landed, the barrier covering the tower was finally unable to endure any longer. The runes of the barrier collapsed, followed by the surface of the tower exploding into countless shards that blasted everywhere. Even the insides of the tower began to collapse and fall towards Ning, but before actually managing to hit him they would all be pushed to one side by his Sword Dao Domain.

Ning lifted his head, staring at the many cracks that had appeared to his left. “Release that star,” Ning instructed.

“Yes, Master!” Azurefiend knew that this tower wouldn’t be able to hold on for much longer, and so he immediately waved his hand, producing a jade-green star that the two of them instantly entered.

BOOM! Soon, the Sithe attacks completely destroyed the tower, causing it to explode and revealing the undamaged jade-green star inside of it.

“He has more treasures? Keep attacking!” The Hegemons and Emperors continued to fight fiercely.

After three attacks, the star was destroyed... revealing a realmship! The realmship was even weaker; it was completely destroyed after just two two attacks. Azurefiend couldn’t help but feel aggrieved at how fast these priceless treasures were being used up, but Ning simply frowned. There wasn’t enough time; treasures on this level simply couldn’t hold on for long.

“No other options.” Ning had Azurefiend’s avatar activate and take control over that Apocalypse-class castle.

This was the most powerful Sithe treasure Ning had acquired to date! It

was more powerful than the Blacksun, the Tigerhill, and even the castle which was protecting the Three Realms! Ning had been planning to give it to the Three Realms once he left this place, but he was out of options. His other treasures were too weak; they weren't able to withstand more than just a few attacks. This meant he wouldn't have any time to analyze the flaws of this place... and once he died, all his treasures would be lost. Even the Paragon of Pills would die here. Now wasn't the time to hold back!

BOOM! A strange, monstrous-looking dark-red castle appeared. Ning and Azurefiend's avatars were located securely within the castle, while Azurefiend was burning up his Immortal energy at a rapid pace to maintain the castle's most basic defenses.

"That's an Apocalypse-class castle!"

"Wait, that's the castle from earlier."

"Attack! Attack! Break through it!" The Hegemons and Emperors continued to attack furiously, raining down blows upon the castle. However, the barriers and runes flowing over the surface of the castle were completely undamaged! An Autarch-level attack would have a chance at breaking through the castle's defenses, but these Sithe weapons weren't quite at this level; at most, these attacks were comparable to the Blazesun Ruler's attacks.

The only reason these attacks were dangerous to Ning was because of how brittle his body was. He was extremely powerful, but attacks from the likes of the Blazesun Ruler would still consume some of his energy. Apocalypse-class castles, however, were extremely stable; they could easily endure the blows head-on.

"Whew." Ning let out a sigh of relief.

"Master, if you had such a powerful treasure, why didn't you take it out right away? We lost so many valuable treasures, including a realmship!" Azurefiend couldn't help but feel some pain at the thought of all that lost wealth.

"They don't matter." Ning didn't explain, as he was still under tremendous pressure. He knew that hiding inside the Apocalypse-class

castle would merely buy them a bit of extra time. There was no way the Sithe would just give up like that.

Ning waved his hand, causing the Paragon of Pills, Lord Annihilation, Hegemon Tia, and Hegemon Flameleft to appear. The four of them instantly sensed how grim the atmosphere seemed to be, and the Paragon of Pills looked towards Ning in a rather puzzled way.

Ning immediately explained, "Please take turns in launching area attacks with the castle." The castle technically had thirty-six stone pillars as well, but Ning didn't have the time to slowly lay down all of the stone pillars into formation. Moreover, this Apocalypse-class castle's most powerful attacks were actually those rays of semi-translucent light! However, those incredibly powerful attacks consumed a similarly incredible amount of power.

Azurefiend's avatar was enough to maintain their defenses, but what about their attacks? Ning was forced to ask the Paragon of Pills and the others to help out. This castle needed a total of thirty-six Emperors to fully activate it, but it could also be used with a lower number.

"All you need to do is make sure you focus your attacks in the same direction," Ning instructed.

"I'll go first." Lord Annihilation instantly began to pour an enormous amount of Immortal energy into the castle. On top of his natural energy regeneration, he also began to make use of the many Immortal pills he carried with him.

The nine towers of the ugly, dark-red castle all lit up. Nine semi-translucent rays of light began to shoot out, tearing through the surrounding space even though they were unable to tear through local spacetime.

Slash! The nine towers shot out rays of light everywhere, causing the spacetime membrane of this dimension to ripple slightly. Alas, the membrane remained stable and unharmed.

"These rays of light are more powerful than the attacks most Sithe weapons can unleash," Ning mused. "The problem is that as a type of area



attack, the power is diffracted. There's no way to use them to breach this dimensional space." This spacetime continuum was extremely stable. Ning had an Autarch's power, but he had the feeling that there was no chance he could break through via raw power! If all nine rays of light managed to concentrate their power on a single location, they might just barely come close to the necessary power level.

"Continue," Ning instructed. The ugly, dark-red castle once more began to launch those repeated attacks. As for Ning, he carefully watched as those distant holes appeared in spacetime with each enemy attack. He was trying to understand the mysteries inherent to this place.

"We can't break through! The castle is too powerful. We aren't able to breach it at all." The exiles were starting to grow anxious.

# Chapter 25: Remaining Lifespan

Their attacks were completely ineffective against this castle, and each time they attacked they had to temporarily create an opening in the membrane surrounding this field of spacetime. The fluctuations generated by these brief openings was enough to let Ji Ning analyze the composition of the formations. Alas, the fluctuations disappeared so very quickly that he couldn't actually go close and take a look in person. His only option was to scry them and their secrets from afar.

"Damn." The Sithe Exalt was watching everything from the Sacred Realm, and he was so angry that his teeth hurt. He never would've imagined that the castle he bestowed upon the first group would prove to be so troublesome now.

"He has to die!" The Sithe Exalt knew that they wouldn't necessarily have another chance like this. He instantly sent down eight more attack-oriented treasures which were strong counters for this castle.

"Here is a diagram of the barriers surrounding the surface of the castle. There are a total of twenty-one critical points in total. If you attack eight of them at the same time, you'll have a chance to destroy it," the Sithe Exalt ordered. The reason why he handed out eight was because he only HAD eight of these dark corrosive treasures. These were the only treasures which were strong counters against this particular castle.

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The exiles began to launch another wave of attacks, while Azurefiend, the Paragon of Pills, Lord Annihilation, Hegemon Tia, and Hegemon Flameleft used all of their power to fight back!

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Suddenly, a series of illusory black longswords shot into the area, slamming against the castle. This time, the barriers of the castle began to tremble and break apart, but thankfully the castle itself was so incredibly thick and sturdy that the attack only blasted out a small crater on its surface.

"Eh?" Ning's face tightened slightly.

“Master, the barriers were breached!” Azurefiend’s avatar said rather nervously.

“It is fine,” Ning said calmly. “The Sithe created this castle. They know the weaknesses of the barriers, which is why they were able to breach them with ease. However, the castle’s outer layer remains incredibly thick. It won’t be easy for them to pierce through it.”

The strongest defensive strength of this castle lay in the materials it was made from. The Tigerhill, for example, was sheathed in a thick layer of deepfire blackstone! Breaking through via raw power would naturally be extremely difficult.

As for this castle? It was even more powerful than the Tigerhill. Its surface was created from a strange, dark-red metal that seemed to be alive. Ning didn’t really know how to describe it, but what he did know was that it was harder to damage than even deepfire blackstone! Those longspear had been filled with a strange type of corrosive energy, which was why they had managed to erode a small crater onto the surface of the castle. If it wasn’t for that, the castle probably wouldn’t have even been marked.

“Attack!”

“Attack!” One longspear after another flew towards the castle, breaking through its barriers repeatedly and gouging out more and more craters on its surface.

Ning cast a sidelong glance at the black mist which clung to those craters. The corrosive black energy was continuing to slowly melt through the surface of the castle.

“Those offensive weapons are applying the Dao of Darkness to a truly incredible degree.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh at this. The Sithe truly had reached the apex in virtually every single Dao.

However, Ning didn’t really care. His attention was primarily focused on analyzing the ripples in spacetime which appeared with each attack.

Time continued to flow on. The Hegemons and Emperors attacked

nonstop, using up a large amount of Immortal energy. Thankfully, they had prepared a large amount of spirit-pills to replenish their power.

They attacked nonstop for nearly an entire hour. By now, the entire castle was covered with a layer of incredibly dense and corrosive black mist. Everyone inside the castle looked quite nervous, because they all knew that this powerful castle was at the verge of collapse.

“Darknorth, we can’t hold on much longer. What should we do?” The Paragon of Pills felt both anxious and guilty. She blamed herself for this, because Ning had only fallen into this Sithe trap due to having come here to rescue her.

“Master, do you have any ideas?” Azurefiend’s avatar was worried about Ning as well.

“At least it bought me an hour,” Ning said. “Don’t worry about the rest.” As he spoke, he waved his hand and drew away the Paragon of Pills and the others. As they disappeared, a look of worry was visible in their eyes. Some were worried about Ning, while others were only worried about themselves! Once Ning died, all of them would die.

To be precise... the Paragon, Azurefiend, Flameleft, and Tia were not afraid of death. They were worried for Ning. Lord Annihilation, however, very much wanted to stay alive!

“Nothing for it. Life and death shall be determined by this!” Ning suddenly cracked a smile. Both his true body and his Primaltwin had spent this period of time analyzing the mysteries of this dimension, seeking a way to destroy it. His Primaltwin had even made use of 100x temporal acceleration! Alas, this sort of spacetime formation would not be easy to deconstruct; even if Ning had 10,000x more time, it still probably wouldn’t be enough.

“We broke through!” The Hegemons and Emperors outside were excited at their successes. BOOM! The dark-red castle’s outer shell was finally corroded through by that dark mist.

“DIE!” A dazzling streak of sword-light suddenly lit up. In the middle of that sword-light was a white-robed figure whose eyes radiated a towering

desire to do battle. Ning had discarded all other thoughts save for one – stay alive! He had to make it out of this place alive! Only if he made it out would the Paragon of Pills and the others survive as well.

“Break! Break! BREAK!” Ning manifested three heads and six arms, simultaneously wielding all six Northbow swords for the first time since his Daomerge. He seemed to have gone completely berserk, and every single attack he used was that of the Space Sword Dao. The destructive yet ephemeral sword-light began to skyrocket in power as all six swords stabbed out at the same time.

Ning attacked using maximum power with each sword, and his swords were the Northbow Swords, the preeminent offensive swords in all the Chaosverse. Every single strike he unleashed had power comparable to those of the most powerful of Autarchs! It must be remembered that although Ning had fought for quite some time, he generally didn’t strike with full-force on his attacks, while very little energy was used up when he merely used evasion-arts. The amount of energy consumed when he went all-out was quite shocking!

Sword-light flashed again and again and again.

BOOM! Finally, a hole appeared in one corner of this dimension, revealing the dark world outside. Swoosh! Ning immediately charged outside.

As soon as Ning charged outside the formation, he instantly appeared in front of a palace within the palace complex. He blinked inside the palace, slaughtering all of the true Sithe within it! As for the Sithe progeny, he confiscated all of their treasures and then locked them up for later testing. If they were truly loyal to the Sithe, they would be put to death in the future.

“Whew.” Ning’s face was rather ashen after he finished mopping up everyone in the palace complex. “Now that sucked. I only have six hundred chaos cycles left,” Ning said with a self-mocking chuckle. He had been forced to use too much power, using maximum-force blows each time as he rained a total of eighteen consecutive blows upon the

formation in order to escape it.

And this was after Ning had spent a full hour analyzing the dimension, discovering some of its critical points. Although he wasn't even close to being able to solve it, by focusing his attacks on those critical points he was able to make his attacks ten times more effective than they otherwise would be. This was why he had chosen to take the risk of launching eighteen full-strength attacks with his Space Sword Dao.

An Autarch who was trapped in a similar situation would've been able to escape much more easily. He could've simply launched nonstop attacks! An Autarch would not run out of energy, and so after ten thousand attacks the formation would be unable to withstand it any longer and collapse.

"Six hundred chaos cycles," Ning mused to himself. Based on his original estimates, he would probably die after another hundred full-force strikes... and based on his actual energy usage, the ten-plus full-strength blows he had launched had resulted in his lifespan being reduced from ten thousand chaos cycles down to six hundred!

This was because a Daolord's crumbling truesoul was like a cracking dam! The more he attacked, the greater the cracks would become. When he first started to fight, the crack would double in size and the truesoul crumbling speed would double. As a result, his lifespan would shorten by half, from around 12,000 chaos cycles to just 6000 chaos cycles!

As he continued to attack, his lifespan would drop by yet another half. The second time, it would 'merely' drop from 6000 chaos cycles to 3000 chaos cycles.

After that, 1500 chaos cycles. After that, 750...

It only took four or five 'rounds' of attacks for his lifespan to drop from 12,000 chaos cycles to 600 chaos cycles, and it would continue to drop from there on. After another ten or so rounds, his lifespan would be reduced to just half a chaos cycle. Technically, however, those ten rounds would 'only' have consumed around 599 chaos cycles, whereas the first few rounds consumed over 10,000 chaos cycles.

Clearly, the more he fought the smaller the absolute value of the effect

on his lifespan would be. Alas, once his truesoul crumbled to a certain degree it would completely fall apart! Much like a dam which was riddled with cracks would eventually collapse, Ning would die after roughly a hundred full-force strikes.

“Six hundred chaos cycles... it’ll be enough!” Ning revealed a smile. “At least I’m still alive. It was all thanks to that extra hour that I managed to survive and escape.”

His truesoul was now crumbling at a far, far faster rate than it had been in the past. Ning raised his head to stare towards the skies. “Next will be the Sacred Realm.”

Aside from Ning, Purgatory no longer held any other living beings at all.

# Chapter 26: No Choice

Although Ji Ning very much wanted to bring the Paragon of Pills out alive, he knew that there was a high chance that he would die on this trip to the Sacred Realm.

“Before going there, I need to first take a look at the cultivation methods these Sithe descendants used.” Ning had always been curious as to how the Sithe had trained their progeny! Their descendants were born and bred within Ning’s Chaosverse, making it impossible for them to train in true Sithe techniques. How, then, did the Sithe teach them? Did they just hand over normal cultivator techniques, or did they use other retrofitted techniques?

Whoosh. Ning willed his Sword Dao Domain to expand outwards, preventing anyone from spying on him. At the same time, he caused a dazed-looking blood-robed Emperor to appear next to him. This was one of the several Emperors and Hegemons Ning had captured.

“Greetings, Daolord,” the blood-robed Emperor said hurriedly with respect.

“Mm. I’m going to ask you a few questions. Be a good boy and answer them for me,” Ning said.

“Go ahead, Daolord. I’ll tell you everything I can,” the blood-robed Emperor replied obediently. Moments later, his gaze turned rather muddled as an illusion took hold of him. He didn’t even try to resist it, and even if he did Ning had reached a far higher level in the Dao of Illusions. The tiny strand of sword-intent which Ning had sent into his consciousness was enough to completely suppress his mind, ensuring that the following illusions worked without fail.

It was much like how ordinary mortals might find themselves going totally blank when they saw something that left them absolutely awestruck. They would briefly lose all capability of rational thought.

Autarchs who didn’t specialize in the Dao of Illusions were still able to take advantage of their overall overwhelming superiority to ensure that



Hegemons would be unable to resist them. Trapping Hegemons within illusions was extremely simple... but of course, the stronger one's Dao-heart was, the less effective this mind-suppressive technique would be.

"The Sithe truly are vicious." Ning continued to flip through this Emperor's memories. "They actually have forced all of their descendants to swear lifeblood oaths to obey all orders the Exalt gives them. That way, it'll be extremely difficult for the descendants to break free from the Sithe, even if they wanted to."

"Huh. They actually train in the exact same types of techniques that we cultivators use." Ning shook his head. "Even the teaching methods are the same."

He flipped through some of the memories he cared about the most, but didn't find any pleasant surprises. Ning then began to review the many memories of the life which this Emperor had lived. This Emperor had been alive for so long and had so many memories that even Ning would need quite a bit of time to process them all. Ning primarily kept his focus on finding hints which would give him a better chance to develop a perfect cultivation path like the one the Sithe used. He wanted to find something that could let him continue to live.

If he could live, why should he seek death? Hope was reserved for the living alone, and so Ning had never given up hope.

He spent a total of three days flipping through this Emperor's memories at high speed. Suddenly, a look of delighted shock appeared on Ning's face. "So this is..."

Long, long ago, the Sithe had transmitted certain special cultivation techniques for their progeny to try out! However, many Sithe descendants encountered problems during the testing process. Some self-detonated and died, while others saw their truesouls destroyed. The Sithe tested out a total of nine different types of techniques, but all of them ended up in failure. Even though the ninth and final technique allowed one to become a Daolord of the First Step, upon actually becoming a Samsara Daolord the cultivator's body would crumble and their truesoul would shatter apart.

From that day forth, the Sithe gave up their research into those nine unique techniques and started to pass down cultivator techniques to their children instead. Much like Ning, they trained in divine power and Immortal energy.

“Nine unique techniques?” A look of delight was on Ning’s face. “The ninth one in particular... it actually allows divine power, Immortal energy, and all other types of energy to join together, strengthening both body and soul. Only, it would fail once the practitioner actually became a Samsara Daolord.”

“Only the most supreme of Sithe could’ve created something like this. I wager it came from their Lord of Chaos, who repeatedly attempted to create a perfect cultivation technique suited for our Chaosverse.” Ning felt rather excited.

“Nine techniques in total, with each cultivator swearing an oath not to pass it down to anyone else? I have to find them.”

Ning felt a sense of excitement and desire for these techniques. The Sithe had failed in their nine special techniques, because they couldn’t truly and directly connect to the Dao of this Chaosverse. Ning, however, could! He might not be at the same level as the Lord of Chaos, but if he acquired those nine Sithe techniques... maybe, just maybe, there would be a chance.

He knew that the chance was extremely low, but he still wanted to give it a shot.

The Hegemons and Emperors who Ning had captured had all been alive for an extremely long period of time. They all knew of the nine secret techniques, but they had all painstakingly followed the normal route to becoming Emperors. Most of them hadn’t even been taught those special techniques! Three of them did know the techniques, but they had sworn oaths not to transmit them; if they attempted to do so, their truesouls would shatter and they would die.

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Outside the hidden dimension.

The black-robed Ning was alongside the avatars of Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg. They had been searching for many years for a way to break into the hidden dimension. During this period of time, all the other Autarchs had also come over to give it a try, but none of them were able to lock onto the exact location of that hidden dimension.

“Autarch Titanos. Autarch Mogg.” Ning asked hurriedly, “Autarchs, have you heard of nine special techniques which the Sithe once bestowed upon their progeny?”

“We know of this, yes.” Autarch Titanos nodded slowly. “During the Dawn War, we actually fought against a number of Sithe descendants during our war against the Sithe. All of them were completely loyal to the Sithe and they fought like rabid dogs. Most of us were filled with bloodlust at the time and showed them no mercy at all. The only one who actually held back and captured a few of them was Autarch Skyfeeder. When she reviewed their memories, she came to learn that the Sithe had once transmitted nine special techniques to them, but all of those techniques were failures.”

The nearby Autarch Mogg nodded. “Most likely, the Sithe wanted to mass-produce a large number of Hegemons or perhaps even Autarchs! They could have their descendants swear lifeblood oaths to never rebel against them, after all. If they succeeded, they would be able to draw power from our Chaosverse... at which point, they could murder those descendants and steal their power, weakening our Chaosverse.”

Ning nodded.

“But they failed. As for those nine techniques, we wanted to find them to see if there was anything which might inspire us,” Autarch Titanos said, “But after the Dawn War concluded, we were unable to find any traces of Sithe descendants, and so we had nowhere to start.”

“What about the ones Autarch Skyfeeder captured?” Ning asked.

“All of them swore lifeblood oaths to never transmit those techniques. When we tried to forcibly rip the techniques out of their memories, their truesouls crumbled apart.” Autarch Titanos shook his head. “Given that

we were unable to find any more Sithe progeny after this, we let the matter rest.”

Ning quickly understood. Sithe progeny were quite rare, and it was also fairly hard to recognize them at a glance. They looked just like ordinary cultivators, after all! The Autarchs couldn't just spend their time wandering the cosmos and flipping through the memories of cultivators at random, right?

“The Sithe descendants.” Ning knew that many of the weaker Sithe descendants in the hidden dimension had never even heard of those nine techniques, much less studied them! The only ones who might truly know those techniques were the high-status Sithe who had been along for a long period of time. Those were generally at the Emperor level.

“I have to spend some time searching this hidden dimension and do my best to find those nine techniques,” Ning mused.

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The Sacred Realm. The Elder Hall.

The blue-haired Exalt remained seated upon his throne, with a large number of Emperors and Hegemons gathered before him. Some of them were true Sithe, while some had been raised and trained over the course of countless years within this enormous hidden region. The Sithe had put quite a bit of effort into rearing these descendants, and their success rates were significantly higher than what the native cultivators were used to.

“Ever since the Dawn War ended... I, Exalt Bowenya, have been stationed in this dimension. I have been here for a very, very long time.” The blue-haired Exalt stared downwards, then continued slowly, “I feel a sense of deep attachment to this dimension, and I truly do not wish for trouble to occur here. In fact, I don't even wish for a second war to begin against the cultivators.”

“However... that isn't a choice I can make! Nor is that a choice any of you can make!” The blue-haired youth stared downwards at them. “A terrifying Daolord has arisen amongst the cultivators, and we have only one choice available to us... kill him!”

“If we can kill him, even sacrificing this entire dimension would be worth it.” The blue-haired youth let out a sigh. “I know that this place is home for many of you Hegemons... and I view it as home as well. I’ve spent the majority of my long life here. Life here has been peaceful and gentle. I don’t want to give it up.”

“But once this Daolord came here, our peaceful life came to an end.” The blue-haired youth’s voice rang out within the Elder Hall, and all of the silent Hegemons and Emperors began to emanate a murderous aura.

Some wanted to kill the Daolord for the great rewards they would be given... but most hated the fact that he had come here and embroiled them in war once more! They didn’t want to fight... but not even Exalts would dare to violate the standing orders of the most supreme Sithe!”

# Credits

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